

SPEECHES AND PAPERS

ON

Indian Questions,

1897 to 1900

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BY

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE.

THE speeches made and the papers written by Mr. R. C. Dutt during the four years of his stay in England, from the beginning of 1897 to the end of 1900, deal with current Indian Questions, and have considerable interest for Indian readers. We have been permitted by Mr. Dutt to issue all of them which are of importance in this collected form.

Editors of English and Indian Magazines in which Mr. Dutt's papers appeared have kindly given their permission for the republication of those papers in the present collection.

THE PUBLISHER.

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I. FAMINES IN INDIA.

[*Reprinted from the Fortnightly Review, August 1897*]

SIXTY years ago, in the very year in which Her Majesty the Queen ascended the throne, her Indian Empire, then managed by the East India Company, was desolated by a great famine. The calamity was confined to the North-Western Provinces of India, but the sufferings of the people, as described by eye-witnesses, were truly heartrending. Villagers lay down in hunger by the wayside, and died with that silent resignation which is more terrible than the wildest excesses and disorder. And famished men and women in the last stage of exhaustion were attacked and devoured by jackals when they were unable to resist or even to escape. There was practically no organization for famine relief in those days, and Lord Auckland's Government could do little to mitigate the sufferings or prevent the deaths of the people.

Scarcely a quarter of a century had passed away when the same Provinces were once more desolated by another severe famine in 1860. Men still in their middle age remember that terrible year, which claimed more victims

in India than the Mutiny, which had recently been quelled. The Government of Lord Canning did what it could to afford relief to the sufferers, and subscriptions were raised in all the towns of British India for this purpose. But in the absence of an organized plan of operation the relief afforded to the sufferers was neither adequate nor very efficacious. A Commission was then appointed to inquire into the causes of the calamity, and we will refer further on to some of the recommendations made by this Commission.

Only six years after this a still more terrible famine broke out in the Province of Orissa. The Government of the day had not taken adequate precautions in time, and when the extent of the distress became fully manifest it was almost too late. Shiploads of rice were hurriedly sent to the suffering Province, but the means of communication were inadequate, and the people in the interior perished in large numbers. Calcutta was flooded by starving men and women with children in their arms, and never did the native population of that great town distinguish themselves in a higher degree by their benevolence and charity than on this memorable occasion. Rich men's houses were converted into relief centres, high officials and merchants went from door to door to collect subscriptions, and tens of thousands of sufferers from Orissa, who had come to Calcutta for refuge, were fed, clothed, and saved by private charity. Those who witnessed the scenes of 1866 are not likely ever to forget them; they are still fresh in the memory of the present writer after a lapse of thirty years.

The next great famine was in Behar in 1874, and this was the first famine in which the relief operations undertaken by Government were adequate, and loss of life was prevented with complete success. The bitter experience of 1866 had left sad recollections, and the Government of 1874 determined to do all that it was possible to do to prevent a repetition of the same scenes. To Lord Northbrook, then Viceroy and Governor-General of India, belongs the credit of having first combated an Indian famine with complete success. The famine was confined to Behar and to parts of Bengal, and the present writer, then a young officer, took his share in the work of famine relief.

A far more terrible famine visited Madras only three years later. In 1877, while Lord Lytton was proclaiming to the great Darbar of Delhi that Her Majesty had assumed the august title of Empress of India, the dark cloud of famine had cast its shadow over the province of Madras. The precautions taken on this occasion were not commensurate with the extent and intensity of the calamity, the operations of relief were not adequate, and the dire calamity counted its victims by the million. Never within the memory of living men, never within the present century, has there been destruction of life so terrible and so great as in the Madras famine of 1877. And when at last that great calamity had subsided and a census was taken, it was found that over *five millions of people* had been swept away. A population equal to the population of Ireland had disappeared under the desolating breath of the famine of 1877.

These figures enable us to some extent to conceive the extent and magnitude of human suffering and death caused by an Indian famine. When we read of the havoc of war or of pestilence in these days, we lament the death of thousands, probably tens of thousands, of our fellow-beings. The Crimean War, one of the most disastrous of modern wars in the loss of life which it involved is said to have cost about two hundred and fifty thousand human lives. The Madras famine claimed *twenty times* the victims of the Crimean War.

The Government of India now awoke to the magnitude of the recurring calamity to which the people of India were subject, and they devised means to prevent a repetition of the scenes of 1877. A Famine Fund was created, partly for the construction of canals and protective railways, and partly as a sinking fund which would enable the Government to borrow with greater facility in years of distress. Much has been said of late of this Famine Fund, and any further remarks on the subject are unnecessary. As Lord George Hamilton stated in the House of Commons, two-thirds of the amount which was proposed to be devoted to famine insurance has been so devoted within the last twenty years. This is eminently satisfactory, and India is better prepared to-day by her railways and canal systems to meet a famine than she was before. But nevertheless one feels a regret that the whole of the amount which was proposed to be devoted to famine insurance in India was not religiously applied to this sole purpose. *

Twenty years have elapsed since the famine of 1877,

and within this period there have been famines in Northern India, in Madras, and elsewhere. But in the year 1896 the autumnal rains failed nearly over the whole of India except in the south, and in the present year, therefore, famine has appeared in Bombay and in Bengal, in the North-West and the Punjab—*i. e.*, over a larger area than was ever desolated by famine in any single year, within this or any preceding century, of which any records have been left to us.

Of the preparations which have been made to meet the present famine, and of the endeavours which every official in India, from the highest to the lowest, is making at the present moment to save human life, I need not speak. Ample details are being published day by day in the shape of message and correspondence from India, and my own testimony would add but little to the information now before the British public. Nevertheless, as an Indian myself, and as an official who was engaged only a few months ago in making inquiries into the state of crops and the condition of the people in one of the afflicted parts of India, I consider it my duty to say a word or two, if only for the information of those Englishmen who have come forward so generously to help my countrymen in this time of their sore distress and need. I desire, therefore, to bear witness to the anxious care and solicitude with which the prospects of crops and the condition of the people have been watched by officials in India since the failure of the last autumnal rains ; to the inquiries which have been made since to ascertain the stocks of food grain, the outturn of harvests, the

requirements of the people, and the probable deficit in the food supply ; and to the plans which have been organised with wisdom and carried out with industry to find out distress by means of test relief works, and to relieve it with all the resources under the command of the Government of India and the Provincial Governments. , So far as the resources of India and the watchful care and industry of officials in India can save lives and relieve distress, those great objects shall be achieved in the present year.

My present object, however, is not to discribe the relief operations which have been adopted in India in the present year, but rather to impress on my readers the fact that famines are a recurring event in India, and that each year of famine, in spite of the most careful relief measures, is attended by sufferings and deaths to an extent of which it is not possible to form an adequate conception in Europe.

It is, therefore, incumbent on us to consider, calmly and dispassionately, what precautionary measures can be adopted to protect the people of India from the worst effects of such dire calamities. Indian questions are unfortunately often discussed with much heat and passion, and before we have proceeded very far in the clear understanding of a question it is clouded by unseemly charges on one side and on the other. But if ever there was a question which required a thorough and calm and dispassionate inquiry, it is the question of protecting the people of India from famines. For Englishmen of all parties are equally interested in this great question,

as they are interested in the welfare of their Indian Empire and the safety of their Indian fellow-subjects.

Replying to Sir William Wedderburn, in course of a discussion in the House of Commons, Lord George Hamilton said : " I agree with the hon. baronet that the opportunity this famine affords ought not to be allowed to pass without our taking every opportunity to inquire into and ascertain the best methods of protecting the people of India from the recurrence of similar calamities." To suggest the best methods for securing this object, in so far as my experience and my knowledge of the condition and wants of my countrymen enable me to do so, is the object of this paper. It is certainly possible to provide remedies which will lessen the force of famines, or prevent them altogether ; and it is incumbent on us to find and to apply such remedies, in order to protect the people from preventible destitution, suffering, and death.

Protective railway works have been constructed all over India. There is no part of the country to which food cannot be transported by rail at a few days' notice. Two hundred million pounds have been spent on railways, and 20,000 miles are open to traffic. No more lines should be constructed out of the public revenues, or under a guarantee of profits from the revenues.

On the other hand, Irrigation works have been neglected. Only twenty million pounds have been spent on irrigation works. Out of 200 million acres of cultivated land in India, only 20 million acres are protected. This is not as it should be. It is possible to construct

canals only in level tracts of the country and in the basin of large rivers ; but storage tanks and wells can be constructed every where. The whole country could have been covered by such works within the last sixty years, since the famine of 1837. The Famine Commission of 1880 drew special attention to this, but their advice has been neglected. It is to be hoped that more attention will be paid to Irrigation after the present famine, so that such wide-spread calamities may be impossible in the next generation.

But more important administrative measures are needed to rescue the agriculturists of India from their chronic state of poverty and indebtedness. The first and the most obvious means of improving their material condition is a reduction of the public expenditure, and a corresponding reduction of the taxes which press heavily on those classes. All Indian administrators within the last quarter of a century have contemplated with something akin to alarm the steady growth of expenditure in India, and the corresponding growth of taxation.

The expensiveness of the present system was well described over ten years ago by Mr. Cotton, now Chief Commissioner of Assam, when he stated that India could no more afford such a system than the English farmer could plough with race-horses or the Indian cultivator with elephants. On this point all authorities are pretty well agreed ; but no practical steps have yet been taken to give effect to this reduction in expenditure desired by all.

Sir Henry Fowler, when discussing the question of the present famine in the House of Commons, remarked :—"If it should prove to be the fact, notwithstanding the surplus of which the noble lord (Lord George Hamilton) has spoken, that this famine will entail, as I am afraid it will, a very considerable charge upon the revenues of India, for the loss from the land revenue will be considerable, I think that it is time for this House, and I am sure this House will be representing the people of the country—in the same spirit in which it made contribution in the case of the Afghan War to the Indian Exchequer—to make an Imperial contribution to the Exchequer of India in aid of the taxation of India." I am convinced my countrymen will appreciate the spirit in which this suggestion was made. But, nevertheless, if I am capable of forming a judgment in the matter, it is not in this shape that a contribution from the British Exchequer will be most acceptable to them. India has always paid for her internal administration, and if the financial relations between England and India were adjusted on a proper basis, India would not stand in need of donations from the British Exchequer for her internal administration.

The reference which Sir Henry Fowler made to the contribution made on the occasion of the Afghan War suggests the true and only method in which England could grant relief to India with justice, and India could receive it with dignity. India now pays not only for her internal administration, not only for the army and defensive works within her own limits, but also for the

maintenance of England's Empire in Asia outside the limits of India. Burma, including the Shan States, is as large as France, and borders on the dominions of France and China. British possessions in the wilds of Beluchistan, Afghanistan, and Chitral extend for hundreds of miles beyond the natural limits of India, and the expensiveness of the occupation and defence of these places is alarming. Little income is derived from the Shan States of Burma, or from Beluchistan, Chitral, or Afghanistan, and India is bled for much of the cost of maintaining these portions of England's Asiatic Empire. England is the richest country in the world, India is one of the poorest. And yet India is made to pay for England's possessions and wars in Asia beyond her own natural boundaries.

Forty years ago, when India passed under the direct rule of the Crown, a pledge was given that the cost of wars outside India would not be charged to India. Within the period of forty years the limits of England's Asiatic Empire (miscalled India) have been extended to the frontiers of China in the east, and have been pushed forward into Afghanistan, Beluchistan, and Tartary in the west; and the cost of these outside extensions has been charged to India. And within this period the expenses of India have so enormously increased that every responsible Indian statesman has been filled with anxiety, and every method of taxation, bearing more and more severely on the people, has been tried, with poor and ghastly results. We seem to be coming back in despair to taxes which every civilised country

has discarded. A scheme to re-impose tolls on roads and to levy a tax on every marriage is now under the consideration of the Bengal Government.

At such a time of need India can legitimately ask England to contribute a share of the vast military expenditure required to sustain her Asiatic Empire. It may be possible to ascertain roughly what proportion of the military expenditure of India is incurred for England's imperial purposes, and the defence of her distant possessions in Africa and in Asia. As the people of England are disposed, judging from Sir Henry Fowler's speech, to give some substantial relief to India out of the English Exchequer, the shape in which such relief would be most acceptable as well as most equitable would be the contribution of this proportion of the military expenditure which India is no longer able to bear alone.

A Commission is now sitting to make a proper adjustment of expenditure as between England and India. Much valuable evidence has been recorded by this Commission, but I will in the present article refer to the evidence of one witness only. Sir Henry Brackenbury is the military member of the Council of the Viceroy of India, and his opinion may be supposed, therefore, to reflect to some extent the opinion of the Indian Government. I take the liberty, therefore, of quoting a part of his evidence from an Indian paper.

"In the first place, I would say that the army in India is largely in excess of the requirements for the preservation of internal order of India. The strength of the army in India is calculated to allow of a powerful field army being placed

on or beyond the Indian frontier, in addition to the obligatory garrisons required for keeping order in India. The necessity for maintaining in India the powerful field army in addition to the obligatory garrisons is caused by the approach of a great military Power into a position which enables her directly to threaten Afghanistan, to which we are under treaty obligations, and indirectly to threaten the security of India itself. The foreign policy of India is directed entirely from England by Her Majesty's Government, and it is part of British foreign policy generally—indeed, the object of British foreign policy as I believe it to be—to secure Great Britain's rule over her Empire. If we desire to maintain British rule in India only for India's sake, then I think it would be fair to make India pay to the uttermost farthing everything that it could be shown was due to Britain's rule over India. But I cannot but feel that England's interest—or Britain's interest—in keeping India under British rule is enormous. India affords employment to thousands of Britons, India employs millions of British capital, and Indian commerce has been of immense value to Great Britain. Therefore it seems to me that India, being held by Great Britain not only for India's sake but for Great Britain's sake, the latter should pay a share of the expenditure for the purpose. And in estimating what that share should be, I think that England should behave generously to India, because, in the first place, England is a rich country and India is a poor country."

This is a stronger argument than mine, and it is urged by a high authority who has a claim to be heard. The facts and arguments urged by the military member of the Viceroy's Council will no doubt appeal strongly to the minds of all thoughtful Englishmen ; and the sad events which are taking place in India before our own eyes in the present year will plead eloquently for a fresh adjustment of the great military expenditure which is necessary for the maintenance of England's Empire in Asia.

For the rest, if England undertakes to pay, not a fixed sum as is sometimes proposed, but a fixed proportion of the total military expenditure now incurred in

India, it will be possible for her to control that expenditure better than it can be controlled in India. From the nature of things, there can be no authority in India able to control any military expenditure which the Viceroy and the Commander-in-Chief consider it necessary to incur ; and practically, therefore, there is no control over such expenditure. No doubt every official in India, from the Viceroy and the Finance Minister to the humble district officer, exerts himself to keep down expenditure within the lowest possible limits. But, nevertheless, the most conscientious spending department would be all the better for some efficient control.

I have confined my remarks to military expenditure, as it is that which presses most severely on the resources of India. If India could obtain some relief in that direction, her other expenses could be easily adjusted. The enormous "Home Charges," too, ought to be somewhat curtailed, and the annual drain from India which is impoverishing the country should be reduced.

The second remedy for improving the condition of the agricultural classes which suggests itself to me is a salutary and needful change in our administrative system. This is a very large subject, but I propose to deal with it briefly, and in a general manner. Hard and fast rules and regulations, framed no doubt with the most benevolent objects, often bear hardly on the agricultural classes. Our law courts, which are in themselves excellent institutions, are often taken advantage of by the money-lender to rivet his chains on the indebted cultivator. Both in civil and in criminal matters the people

are compelled to travel to distant and expensive courts, and taught to depend on tutored evidence to win their cases, true or false. Litigation is eating into the vitals of the agricultural population, and no adequate endeavours have been made to organize village institutions for settling village disputes. All power is centralised in district authorities far removed from the homes of most villagers, and no real power is left in the hands of village elders and village unions. I have known an instance in which the people of a village had to wait for days or weeks before they could remove a tree which had fallen across a village path and obstructed the road : they could not do this without orders from the police ! Centralisation of power has been carried too far, and has crushed all life out of village organizations.

There is great room for improvement in this direction, and much can be done to save villagers from litigation in our law courts, and ruin through indebtedness. Courts of conciliation should be organized to settle village disputes, and other measures should be adopted to save villagers alike from our expensive law courts and from the tricks of rapacious money-lenders. Agricultural banks should be opened to help substantial tenants, and every endeavour should be made to enable them to stand on their own legs.

The third remedy which I have to suggest relates to land assessments. Over eighty per cent. of the population of India are dependent on agriculture, and it is no exaggeration to state, therefore, that the well-being of the people of India depends on the wisdom and

moderation with which lands are assessed. The Indian Government, and all the local Governments, are no doubt animated by a desire to proceed with moderation in making assessments. But, on the other hand, it should always be borne in mind that the land revenue bears a fairly large proportion to the total revenues of India, and an endeavour is naturally made, at every settlement, to raise the land revenue to some extent, in order to obtain a substantial increase in the general revenues. And when it is added that these settlements are made in the same Province and in the same district again and again in a century, and that at each settlement Government expects and does obtain a substantial increase in revenue, it can be understood that the margin of profit left to cultivators can never increase, however much agriculture may flourish in the country.

Thanks to the generous policy of Lord Cornwallis, the greater part of Bengal is free from the increasing demand from the produce of the land. No single act of the British Government that can be named has done so much for the prosperity and well-being of the people as the permanent settlement of the land revenue of Bengal effected by Lord Cornwallis in 1793. Cultivation has largely increased since that year, and prices have risen, but the profits have remained with the people of the country, and the landlords of Bengal are at the present day among the most contented and loyal classes of people in India. And as the landlords are not subject to increasing demands on the part of the Government, they themselves have been stopped by three successive Acts

from obtaining increase of rent from cultivators, except on the most reasonable grounds. The result is that the Bengal cultivator is more prosperous and better able to stand the effects of droughts and of bad harvests than the cultivator in any other part of India. There never has been a serious famine in Eastern Bengal within the memory of living men, or since the permanent settlement of 1793. And when there was a famine in Western Bengal (Behar) in 1874, the measures taken for relief were more completely successful in saving life than any other relief operations that have been undertaken, before or since, in any other part of India. And lastly be it added, that in the present calamitous year, when the whole of India (except the extreme south) has suffered, the number of men on relief works in Bengal is, in proportion to her population, less than the number of men in the North-West or in Bombay. The worst cases of distress, starvation, and high mortality are reported not from Bengal, but from the other afflicted Provinces.

Those who know India well know that the peasantry of Bengal are better able to take care of themselves in the worse times than the peasantry of other Provinces. Many instances of the self-reliance of the Bengal cultivators must occur to every administrative officer who has served in Bengal, but I will mention only one instance, which appears to me to be as good as any other. In 1876 a cyclone and a storm-wave, over twenty feet high, broke on the south-eastern coast of Bengal, swept away two hundred thousand people, and utterly destroyed the crops in many parts. It was a year of much suffering

and sorrow and death. Dead bodies lay thick on the ground as on a battle-field : some hung on the trees to which they had been lifted up by the wave, and some were floated in and out by every changing tide. The huts of the villagers were utterly demolished and swept away, and men and women and children lived under trees or under the most imperfect shelter which had been hastily constructed. A good deal of their cattle and property was also destroyed, and rest was floated up and down into other villages. Each villager was content to lose what he lost, and kept what he got, so that there was a sort of redistribution of property such as would have delighted the soul of the most thoroughgoing Socialist. To add to the horrors of the year, a cholera epidemic, the like of which I have never seen, and never wish to see again, visited the afflicted parts and carried away tens of thousands of the surviving villagers.

Amidst these appalling calamities the agricultural classes of South-Eastern Bengal showed a resourceful self-reliance which astonished me and every other administrative officer on the spot. From the branches of the innumerable areca-nut trees which grow in these parts they constructed temporary huts for themselves and their families. They searched up and down the country for their lost property and cattle, and recovered what they could find. They gathered in what remained of the much injured harvest, and this served them for a few months. They travelled long distances, sometimes twenty or thirty miles, to obtain cholera-pills and other drugs from the doctors whom Government had sent

to the spot, and did what it was possible to do to lessen the force of that dreadful epidemic. After their store of rice was exhausted, they sold their brass utensils and the silver jewellery of their women, and imported boatloads of rice from other parts of Bengal. They constructed new villages and new markets all over the land, resumed their old industries, and kept off famine by their own industry and resource. As the executive officer in charge of one of the worst tracts during this calamitous year, I undertook some measures for the relief of helpless women and children who had lost their relations. The able-bodied people needed no relief, and asked for none. From the 31st October, 1876, when the storm-wave broke on the land, to the 31st of August, 1877, by which date the autumnal harvest began, the people of South-Eastern Bengal, who had lost their houses, property, and crops, saved themselves from a famine by their own resources. And this was the year when the unfortunate and resourceless peasantry of Madras succumbed to a famine—the worst which has been known in India in this century.

It is needless to multiply instances. From an experience of over twenty-five years, spent mostly among the peasantry, I am able to state—and those who know India best will agree with me—that if the object of the permanent settlement of 1793 was to create a thoroughly loyal class of landlords and a prosperous class of peasantry in Bengal, that object has succeeded beyond all expectation.

The distinction which we perceive to-day between

the condition of the Bengal cultivator and the condition of the North-West cultivator was perceived by Lord Canning as long ago as 1860, and that great statesman did not fail to discover its true cause. After the famine of 1860 Lord Canning appointed a Commission to inquire into its causes. Colonel Baird Smith, R.E., was the distinguished President of the Commission: he found after a careful inquiry that the famine of 1860 had been less disastrous than that of 1837, and he attributed this to the greater fixity of the public demand from the soil in the later than in the former date. Convinced of this fact, he had the courage to recommend a permanent settlement for the North-Western Provinces or for all India. I quote his words below :—

“Such having been the results of the protracted fixity of the public demand, the security of titles, the general moderation of assessments, the recognition and general record of rights, the inference seems irresistible that, to intensify and perpetuate these results, we must proceed still further in the same healthy and fruitful direction. The good which has been done by partial action on sound principles is both a justification and an encouragement to further advances; and entertaining the most earnest conviction that State interests and popular interests will alike be strengthened in an increasing ratio by the step, the first, as I believe, the most important measure I have respectfully to submit is the expediency of fixing for ever the public demand on land, and thus converting the existing settlement into a settlement in perpetuity.”

Such a liberal and statesmanlike recommendation was not lost on Lord Canning. A Government resolution was published, which set forth the views of the Government in the following terms :—

“His Excellency in Council sees no reason to doubt that the measure would be in every way beneficent. He believes that the increased security of fixed property and the comparative freedom from interference of fiscal officers of the Government will tend to create a class which, although composed of various races and creeds, will be peculiarly bound to British rule, while, under proper regulations, the measure will conduce materially to the improvement of the general revenue of the Empire.”

The different Provinces of India were thus about to obtain, under Lord Canning, that great boon which Bengal had obtained under Lord Cornwallis. The Secretary of State approved of the Viceroy's proposal, and sent a despatch which concluded in the following terms :—

“After the most careful review of all these considerations, Her Majesty's Government are of opinion that the advantages which may reasonably be expected to accrue, not only to those immediately connected with the land, but to the community generally, are sufficiently great to justify them in incurring the risk of some prospective loss of land revenue in order to attain them ; and that a settlement in perpetuity in the districts in which the conditions required are or may hereafter be fulfilled is a measure dictated by sound policy, and calculated to accelerate the development of the resources of India, and to insure in the highest degree the welfare and contentment of all classes of Her Majesty's subjects in the country.”

India was thus on the eve of obtaining a great boon, when her hopes were dashed to the ground by the death of one man. Lord Canning, who had held firm sway over India during the unexampled disasters of the Mutiny, and whose moderation and sympathies for the people of the country had won him the name of Clemency Canning, left the country in March, 1862

with a shattered constitution, and died in the following June. England honoured the hero who had saved India by interring his remains in Westminster Abbey, and India mourned, with good reason, the loss of one whose large-hearted wisdom did not animate his successors.

After the death of this benevolent ruler, Indian officials formed a different opinion on the question of permanent settlements. Some of them reported that if assessments could no longer be periodically raised in future, it would be, so far, a prospective loss to Government and a sacrifice of land revenue. These counsels prevailed ; the idea of a permanent settlement was finally abandoned in 1883, and the North-Western Provinces are subject to increase of land revenue at each settlement.

What is stated of the North-Western Provinces is true also of Bombay and Madras and the Central Provinces of India. Periodical settlements take place in these Provinces, and each settlement means a fresh increase in the rental. Settlement officers, at least in the higher grades, do not consciously make excessive demands ; on the contrary, they desire to be moderate and fair. The settlement operations of the Province of Orissa went on before my own eyes during the whole of the last year, and I willingly testify to the moderation and fairness of the young settlement officer who presided over these operations. But, nevertheless, the anxiety to have some increase in the revenue animates all officers from the highest to the lowest, and every increase in the revenue is a corresponding decrease in the resources

of the people, and their capacity to provide against years of bad harvest. The share of the produce from land generally left to the people enables them to live well enough in good years, but it does not enable them to provide against bad times. It is for this reason that we hear of frequent evictions of cultivators in the Southern Provinces, and it is for this reason also that immediately after a bad harvest the tenants of the North-West Provinces, Madras, and Bombay succumb more hopelessly than cultivators in Bengal.

More than a hundred years have elapsed since the time of the permanent settlement in Bengal. Within this time repeated settlements have taken place in the other Provinces of India and rents have been raised ; and the increase in the prices of food grains has not benefited the cultivator in those Provinces as it would benefit the English farmer, and it has benefited the Bengal tenant. Railways and other causes which have led to a rise in the price of wheat and rice in India have largely and steadily added to her land revenue, and have not conduced to make the condition of the rice-grower and the wheat-grower more prosperous. The ever-recurring settlement sweeps away all increase in profits ; and, even in this disastrous year, when famine has thrown its dark shadow over the land, the harassing and ceaseless settlement operations are still going on in some parts of India, securing an increase in the Government revenue, and leaving the classes dependent on land a smaller margin of profit than before the settlements.

I have dwelt long on this question because there is no other question which so directly and vitally affects the condition of the mass of the people as this, and 'because it is often overlooked by those who are not familiar with the details of Indian administration. Land is the source of living of four-fifths of the population: leave them a good margin of profits from land and they are prosperous; sweep away all increase in the profits from land into the Imperial treasury at every settlement, and they are impoverished and helpless.

If, then, it be desired to insure to some extent the Indian cultivator against recurring famines, it is necessary to insure to him the future profits from land. In the words of a former Secretary of State, "A settlement in perpetuity in the districts in which the conditions required are or may hereafter be fulfilled is a measure dictated by sound policy." But if the settlement officer is constantly among the agricultural population, pruning away every increase in the profits from land once in thirty years, or once in fifteen years, it is idle to talk of improvement in the condition of the agricultural population.¹

(1) Since the above was written I am glad to find that the proposal of a permanent settlement of the land revenue, at least in certain parts of India, has the support of the singularly well-informed and talented writer on Indian Affairs in *The Times*, the well-known Sir William Hunter. "Shrewd observers assert that the absence of a permanent settlement operates as a discouragement to improvement, and that, as a matter of fact, the Government pays dearly for its power to raise the rent by checking the prosperity of the people. . . . The main fact remains that the Government has given a distinct and a repeated promise of permanent settlement, and that the time has come to redeem it. The request for the fulfilment of that promise is not made by political agitators, but by a body of loyal proprietors who have done their utmost to strengthen the hands of the Government in all times of need, and who believe that fixity of tenure more than any other measure will enable them and their tenants to resist famine."—*The Times*, 27th April, 1897.

The present year is a memorable year in the history of the British Empire. British subjects, whether they live in Europe or in America, in Africa or in Australia, are rejoicing over the celebration of the long reign of their gracious Sovereign. In India alone a voice of lamentation is heard. Ten times within these sixty years India has suffered from terrible and desolating famines, and the last famine is, in the area affected, the worst known in the history of the country. But out of evil cometh good. And if this great calamity which has overtaken Indian cultivators through the length and breadth of the country brings about a more liberal policy of land settlements, and secures for India generally the great boon of a perpetual settlement which Lord Cornwallis bestowed on Bengal and Lord Canning proposed to bestow on other Provinces, the three hundred millions of the Queen-Empress's Indian subjects will have truly cause to bless her name and to cherish memory. It will be an act worthy of the gracious Sovereign and the gracious occasion. And the story will be handed down among the Indian peasantry from generation to generation, that the great Empress who, by the grace of God, lived to reign sixty years in England, bestowed the great boon of fixity of rent to the cultivators of India because she loved them well, and was distressed to see them suffering from famine and hunger.

Fourthly and lastly, I would suggest some administrative action to encourage and revive the ruined industries of India. A nation which depends entirely on agriculture cannot but be poor ; and it would be a wise and states-

manlike policy to diversify the occupations of the people of India, and thus add to their resources. It is a large subject which requires full treatment in a separate article ; and I therefore content myself by merely mentioning it in this place.

I conclude this article by summarising the suggestions made above. My suggestions are few and simple and, I venture to hope, practicable. They are ; *firstly*, a contribution from the British Exchequer towards the military expenses of her Asiatic Empire and a reduction of the annual economic drain from India ; *secondly*, a reform in the administration and the removal of certain causes which are palpably leading to the impoverishment of the cultivators ; *thirdly*, a settlement in perpetuity of the revenues derived from the soil ; *fourthly*, encouragement of Indian industries and manufactures.

My first suggestion contemplates a contribution, which I venture to think is a just and equitable one, from the British Exchequer towards the maintenance of the British Empire in Asia. And my third suggestion contemplates a possible sacrifice of prospective increase in the land revenue of India, although such sacrifice is likely to be more than compensated in other ways if the condition of the agricultural classes is bettered. To those statesmen who shrink from the idea of the smallest concession and the smallest sacrifice my appeal will be made in vain. But I may point out to them that no great result has been achieved without some sacrifice, and that the condition of the peasantry of India cannot be improved by the trick of a conjuror. A famine Code

is an excellent thing, but it prescribes the method of treatment when the disease is on us, and is not a preventive. A Famine Fund is also an excellent provision, but it means additional taxation on the people. The true remedy for famines, therefore, is some measure which will directly decrease expenditure, and will leave something more with the cultivator than he is now allowed to keep. No remedy can be generally efficacious which does not achieve these two objects—decrease in India's expenditure, and increase in the resources of the masses. You cannot eat your cake and give it to the poor. And unless you are prepared to make some reduction—some concession and sacrifice—it is idle to talk of improving the condition of the peasantry of India.

Much has been said of the increase of population in India. But India is not the only country in which population increases. The population of the British Islands was twenty-five millions when the Queen ascended the throne ; it is now forty millions, not counting ten millions more who have found homes beyond the seas. The population of India, excluding annexations, has not increased at half this rate. On the other hand, trade and commerce have increased in India, railways and canals have been opened, wastes have been brought under cultivation, and the resources of the country have been developed during these sixty years. The increase of population has not been greater than the increase in cultivation. The increase in population affords no explanation, therefore, for the recurring famines of India.

Let us have done with such generalizations, and go

to the root of the matter. Let us, or those of us who can do so, mark the condition of the Indian cultivator in his home, and find out what causes impoverish him and make him unable to save. The reason is not a want of frugality, or of sobriety, or of prudence. The Indian peasant is the most sober, the most frugal, and the most prudent peasant on the face of the earth. The reason is, that at each settlement the rent payable by him is increased, and his capacity to save is decreased. The reason is that, with no savings of his own, he goes to the money-lender under every pressure, and our Civil Courts, with their hard-and-fast rules, only cast him deeper into the meshes of the money-lender. The reason is that in every petty dispute, civil and criminal, he is compelled to have recourse to distant and expensive law courts. The reason is that he has to pay many taxes in order to maintain England's Empire in Asia.

If, having our eye still on the condition of the Indian cultivator, we desire to remove or lessen one by one these causes which impoverish him, we find that some improvements in the administration must be effected, and some concessions and sacrifices must be made. If we are prepared to make these concessions and sacrifices, we can better the condition of the Indian peasant. If we are not prepared to make any concessions and sacrifices, then this terrible year of suffering and death will have passed away without teaching us any useful lesson, and without leading to the removal of those causes which have intensified famines in India during the last sixty years.

II. LIBERALISM AND PEACE.

*[Speech delivered at Swindon on January, 29, 1898,
in support of the Liberal Candidate Lord
Edmond Fitzmaurice.]*

A LARGE and enthusiastic meeting was held at Swindon in support of the Liberal candidate for the Cricklade division, Lord Edmond Fitzmaurice, brother of Lord Lansdowne late Viceroy of India, but a true Liberal in English politics. The candidate himself, Lord Edmond, spoke on home politics, and Mr. Romesh Dutt, C.I.E., spoke on Indian affairs for nearly an hour. No full report of the speech was published ; the following summary of the speech is taken from *India*.

Mr. Dutt said that he considered it an honour and a privilege to appear in support of the Liberal party and of the liberal candidate Lord Edmond Fitzmaurice. He appeared before them, not altogether as a stranger, but as a British citizen, and as one who was proud to call himself a subject of their beloved Queen. The name of the Queen of England was cherished with affection and love in all the colonies and dependencies of England's world-wide empire, but nowhere did it evoke greater loyalty and affection than among the millions of India. (Cheers.) Nor was this merely a passive sentiment. In times of action the people of India had ever risked their lives for their Queen, side by side 'with the bravest soldiers whom these islands had sent out,

as was proved by the incidents of the present war. (Cheers.) What was the secret of this loyalty? What was the secret of the British ascendancy in India? Military people sometimes asserted that India was conquered by the sword and held by the sword. (Cries of "No, no.") He was glad that this assertion was so emphatically denied, because a fals^er assertion was never made. He maintained without hesitation that India was won by good government and was held by good government. (Prolonged cheers.) In the last century when the central power of Mogul Emperors had gone to pieces, when lawless freebooters swept through the country, when State warred against State and tribe warred against tribe, the British Power appeared on the scene as the one Power which could give the country peace and rest and settled government and a just administration. The people saw this and felt this, and spontaneously gave their support to this Power. In Bengal, in Madras, in Bombay, in the North-West, the silent and efficacious support of the people, and not victories on the battle-field, had helped the rise of the British power, and maintained British power in India. To this day, the silent and efficacious support of the people supported the government, which in spite of blunders and mistakes meant to be just to the people. All administrative officers knew this. He himself had taken his humble share in the work of administration under the Government of India for over twenty-five years; he had charge of Indian Districts with areas of four to six thousand square miles, with populations of two to three millions,

situated hundreds of miles from the nearest seat of the army, and having for his support only a few subordinate civil officers, and a body of police less than five hundred strong. But under these circumstances he felt perfectly secure in the exercise of his power and authority, because of the silent and efficacious support of the people among whom he worked, and who knew that whatever his blunders were, whatever the blunders of the Government were he was trying honestly to promote their welfare, secure peace and do justice between man and man. (Cheers.) India was thus held not by the sword but by good government. If the government turned unwise and foolish and oppressive, the seventy thousand British troops could not hold together a population of over two hundred millions for a single generation—not for a single decade. (Cries of “No, they could not.”) And if the Government were wise and recognised the claims of the people for reforms and popular privileges, nothing could sever India from England. (Cheers.) Looking back to the history of the past forty years, he maintained that, generally speaking, whenever the Liberals had been in power for a long period, India had enjoyed peace and good government, and whenever the Tories had been in power for a long time, India had drifted into foolish and unjust annexations, into sinful and disastrous wars. (Loud cheers.) He pointed to the period of sixteen years since the abolition of the East India Company, from 1858 to 1874, during which the Liberals were in the power at home with brief interruptions, and during which India enjoyed

peace under wise rulers like Lord Canning and Lord Lawrence, Lord Mayo and Lord Northbrook. He pointed to the next period of six years, 1874 to 1880, when the Tories were in power, and when an unwise Viceroy was sent out to carry out an unwise policy which ended in disaster and war. He pointed to the third period of 1880 to 1885, when the Liberals were in power, and India enjoyed peace once more under the beneficent administration of Lord Ripon, than whom no better or greater Viceroy had ruled in India. And he pointed to the last period, 1885 to the present date, when the Tories were in power with brief interruptions, and during which successive Viceroys,—Lords Dufferin, Lansdowne, and Elgin,—had wasted the revenues of impoverished India in making unprofitable annexations and useless forts beyond India, in weakening the frontier and making enemies of friendly tribes. (Cries of "Shame.") Mr. Dutt then referred to the calamities which had crowded on India in the year of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee—famine, plague, and a needless and iniquitous war. Amidst these complications, in the face of the vast expenditure which had to be incurred for the relief of the famine and the prosecution of the war, India expected some help, some relief from the British Exchequer. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had given some hope of relief about a month ago, and had then turned round and said that the Indian Government did not want the money from the British Exchequer. The reason of this sudden change had leaked out through a paper in India, which had mysterious access to the views of the

Indian Government. That paper had said that Parliamentary interference in Indian concerns had done mischief in the past, and it was undesirable to let the British workman pay for the Indian war, lest he enquired too minutely into the causes and the necessity of the war ! It came to this, that the Indian Government were so afraid of the British public enquiring into Indian wars and Indian administration that they would rather have no help from the British Exchequer than ask for help which might be followed by enquiry. (Cries of "Shame.") But he hoped that the British public would enquire into Indian questions, and he hoped that his hearers would support that great Liberal party which had in the past identified itself with peace and domestic improvement in India.

There was loud and prolonged cheering for nearly a minute when Mr. Dutt resumed his seat, and when he left the room a few minutes later to catch the train for Oxford, the audience left their seats, shook hands with him, and followed him with cries of "God bless your countrymen."

III. FRONTIER WAR AND FAMINES.

[*Speech delivered at Oxford on March 7, 1898.*]

ON Monday evening a public meeting was held in the Corn Exchange under the auspices of the Oxford Liberal Association, when Mr. Romesh Dutt, C.I.E., was invited to deliver an address on the question of "Frontier War and Famines in India." Among those present were Professor Sidgwick (who presided), Professor Macdonell, the Sheriff Mr. Cooper, Alderman Downing, Councillors Dodd, English, Moore, and J. H. Salter, Messrs. J. Massie, S. Ball, Snow, A. M. Bell, Norman Smith, Grubb, A' Bear, Wintle, Watts, Jackson, Miss Weld, Mrs. Peters, Miss Goodwin, &c. The following summary of the speech is taken from the *Oxford Journal*.

The lecturer at the outset described the Lawrence policy of the Liberal party, and the Lytton policy of the Tory party, and said that, without going into details, if they looked back upon the history of the past forty years, they would find that whenever the Liberals were in power in this country they had tried to maintain what was known as the Lawrence policy, and endeavoured to promote the peace and happiness of the people of India; but whenever the Tory party was in power for any length of time, they had followed the Lytton policy, and had tried to discover a scientific frontier in India which had not yet been found! He did not make this as a

sweeping statement, but it was a fact that the Liberal Government had always been more or less mindful of the needs of the country, while the Tories had always aspired to foolish expeditions and conquests. He was glad to tell them this guest after an undiscoverable frontier had at last come to an end, and that Lord George Hamilton had at last accepted the Lawrence policy with regard at least to the greater part of the Indian Frontier. The question arose however, now that the war was over, who was to pay the cost of this war that had taken place? The war had been imposed upon India not by the policy of India but by the Imperial policy of England, and question was, if the Imperial Exchequer should not meet the expense. They would remember that seventeen years ago, during Mr. Gladstone's administration, the same question was debated in the House of Commons, and Mr. Gladstone and his cabinet with a sense of fairness and of justice came to the conclusion, that as England was responsible for the war of 1878, she should bear at least a portion of the cost; and five millions were contributed by this country to the cost of that Afghan War. (Applause). The same reasons still held good, and they all expected that, in view of the special calamities under which India was suffering, the Tory Government would have the justice at least to contribute some share of the expense of the late war. But no, that was not the Tory policy. Their policy was to run the empire on the cheap, and to go to war and make other countries pay for it! Wisely, England

had so far avoided wars in various parts of the world; she had avoided war in China, in Crete, and in South and West Africa. He said wisely, because he was always glad to see war avoided as long as it could be avoided, consistently with the honour of the nation. (Hear, hear). In two places only had England gone to war—on the frontier of India, and on the frontier of Egypt, but in both cases they made other countries pay, while England had declined to contribute anything towards the cost. If the nation wanted war, and thought its honour was involved, the nation ought to be prepared to make the sacrifices; but to make war from a spirit of Jingoism and make other nations pay, was a proceeding which would not have the approbation of Englishmen. (Applause). He asked them as men of ordinary common sense, was it possible that India in the present year should meet the enormous expenditure incurred by this war on the frontier? From their own admission, between five and six millions had been spent in consequence of the famine;—was this a year in which India should bear the burden of a war without some assistance? He said emphatically it was not, and the reason England was not asked to pay any share of the cost was this, that when an Englishman paid, wanted to know the reason why. And it would be difficult indeed for the most ingenious Cabinet Minister to find out a reason for this unnecessary and senseless war. (Hear, hear). The speaker then referred to the effects upon India of the famines of 1837, 1860, 1866, 1874, 1876, and of 1896, and remarked that the last

famine was more wide-spread than any previous famine that had occurred in the present century. The civil officers did their very best to relieve the sufferers, and when Englishmen undertook to do a thing, they knew how to do it, and did not spare themselves. All this was very satisfactory, but the deeper question arose, why should there be so many famines in India, why such a terrible death-rate from starvation? They never heard of such famines in any other civilised country of the world. They sometimes heard of scarcity, but they never heard in any civilised country of famines so desolating, so destructive of human life and so frequent as in India. He had seen this question answered in various ways, but the answers were both unsatisfactory and untrue. It was sometimes said the population of India increased beyond the ordinary rate of increase in Europe, and that when a population increased to such an extent, they must make up their mind to die by famine. But the population did not increase at a larger rate or even at the same rate as the population of these islands. It was also said that the peasantry of India were wreckless and unthrifty, and that one could not help people who would not help themselves. But he (the speaker) knew of no peasantry who were so sober, frugal, and so absolutely parsimonious, as the peasantry of India. No, the real reason lay in the fact that the expenditure of the Indian Government, with its wasteful wars and a vast army, was far more than the population of India could bear. Quite four-fifths of the population depended entirely on agriculture; therefore if they so

adjusted taxation as to leave a fair margin of profit to the agriculturists, the people would be prosperous. But if they raised the land tax from time to time so as to leave no margin to the people, nothing could save them from poverty and indebtedness, and from famines whenever there was a bad harvest. All this talk about improving the material condition of India was idle mockery. If they were earnest in their desire to improve the condition of the people of India, two things were necessary; first, the reduction of expenditure, and secondly, a reduction of taxation on land on which and which alone the people lived. A strong, good government always secured peace and economy; feeble and fussy governments suffered alternately from panic and vain-gloriousness. The speaker therefore appealed to them to administer India again as it had been administered by wise statesmen in the past, and to renew the policy of men like Lord Canning, Lord Lawrence and the Marquis of Ripon. (Applause).

On the proposition of Mr. Ball, seconded by Mr. Dodd a hearty vote of thanks was accorded to the Lecturer, and a similar compliment was paid to Professor Sidgwick for presiding.

IV. NEW IMPERIALISM IN INDIA.

*[Speech delivered at the Sixth Annual Conference of the
Women's National Liberal Association,
on May, 17, 1898.]*

THE Sixth Annual Conference of the Women's National Liberal Association was opened on Tuesday morning in St. Martin's Town Hall, London. There was a large attendance, the hall being well filled. Lady Hayter presided at the morning session, and among those on the platform were Mrs. Bryce, Miss Shaw-Lefevre, Miss Orme, Mrs. Grimwade, Mrs. Crossley, Mrs. Reeves, Sir Francis and Lady Evans, Mr. and Mrs. Byles, Sir Arthur Hayter, Mr. Ellis Griffith, M.P., Mr. Herbert Paul and Mr. Romesh Dutt, C. I. E. The following report of Mr. Dutt's speech is taken from *India*.

Mr. Dutt said : I consider it an honour and a privilege to be asked at this great annual gathering to say a few words on India, and I respond to the call with the utmost satisfaction, because there never was a time probably within this generation, when Indian affairs demanded your attention more urgently, and when my countrymen needed a larger share of your help and your sympathy. You are aware that last year, at the very time when the people of this country, and the people of British colonies and dependencies all over the world, were celebrating the Diamond Jubilee of the reign of their beloved Queen, India was passing through a series of

calamities which find no parallel in the previous history of the country. A famine, wider in the area affected than any previous famine of which there is any record, desolated the fairest provinces of India. A plague, unprecedented in its extent and virulence, half depopulated for a time our fairest towns, and has travelled from Poona to Bombay, and from Bombay to Calcutta. And, as if these natural calamities were not sufficient, the Government brought upon themselves a disastrous war with tribes living beyond the Indian frontier, who are our best friends if we leave them alone,—(Cheers),—and who are our worst enemies if we interfere with their tribal independence, (Cheers). But it is not of these great calamities that I wish to speak this morning. The famine happily is over, and the one consoling incident connected with this famine is the sympathy and the help which were exhibited by the people of this country with their fellow subjects in India. You ladies and gentlemen, sent out from your private purses over half-a-million of English money for the sufferers in India ; it was a kind act, which has not been forgotten, and will not be forgotten, by the people of India. But though the famine of the past year is over, the question will arise in thoughtful minds why India is afflicted by such frequent famines under British rule. It was the tenth great famine which has visited India within the sixty years of Her Majesty's reign, and these ten great famines have swept away more than ten millions of the population of India. It is a sad chapter in the history of British rule in India, and the lesson which these famines teach us is that so long as an ever-

increasing land tax is raised from the poor cultivators of the soil, their condition can never improve, and they can never be safe from famines and deaths in the future. We in India are not now a great manufacturing nation, nor are we a great commercial nation; but we are a great agricultural nation, and four-fifths of the population of India subsist directly or indirectly on agriculture. If the Government of India places some reasonable limits on the Land Tax, the cultivators can save something in good years to meet the calamities of bad years, as they do in Bengal. But if the Government of India continuously enhances the land revenue at each recurring settlement as they are now doing, the cultivating classes must necessarily be impoverished and indebted, and must perish in large numbers at each famine. Nowhere probably during the last year was the famine severer and more fatal than in the Central Provinces of India. And yet while the people were dying by the ten thousand, the settlement operations were proceeding, and the revenue was being enhanced. One of our best friends in the House of Commons, Mr. Samuel Smith (Cheers) asked the Secretary of State for India, if, in view of the famine from which those Provinces have lately suffered, he would postpone for a few years the introduction of the enhanced assessment. The Secretary of State for India declined to do so. (Shame). If policy like this is pursued in India there can be no improvement in the condition of the masses, and no protection from poverty, starvation, and deaths from famine. The frontier war too is happily over, and I

need not say much about it except to remind you that the present Government which brought on the war by reversing the Chitral policy of their predecessors have had the kindness and the generosity to throw the whole pecuniary burden of the war on the famine-stricken population of India ! If there had been a frontier war in any of the self-governing colonies of England under similar circumstances, do you think England would have sent the bill of costs to the colony for payment ? And is it fair or just or righteous that the famine-stricken people of India should be treated differently because they are not self-governing, because they trust in the good faith and honour of England ? Far different was the treatment which we received from the Liberal Government of that just and great and righteous statesman, whose name is as lovingly cherished in millions of grateful hearts in my own country, as it is in this country where he has lived and worked. (Prolonged cheers). Seventeen years ago, Mr. Gladstone was in power when the Afghan war was concluded, and with that fairness and sense of justice which were a part of him he contributed five millions of money from the English Exchequer towards the cost of that war. Contrast that action with the ungenerous and unjust decision of the present Government, which is distributing doles to all its friends and supporters, but cannot make a contribution which India demands with justice. But I turn from the subject of the frontier war, to the internal administration of India. You would expect naturally that in a year in which we have suffered so much from

an accumulation of disasters and calamities, we would at least receive some sympathy and considerate treatment at the hands of the Government. The fact, however, is that a change has come over the spirit of the Indian administration, and New Imperialism is signaling itself in India by measures of coercion and acts of confiscation. I can remember the administration of India from the time when it passed from the Company to the Crown, forty years ago, and I do not exaggerate when I state that among all the dark periods of British rule in India within these forty years, there was not a darker period for repressive legislation and for coercive measures than the present. You have heard how two respectable and honoured citizens of Bombay were deported by the Government, and were kept in confinement for nine months without a trial, and that even now they have not been released from all restrictions. You have heard of the prosecution instituted against the Indian Press, and of the monstrous sentences passed by Indian judges on editors of newspapers, sentences which have shocked public opinion in this country as well as in India. And you have heard of the Acts recently passed by the Indian Government to virtually gag the Press of India—in spite of the opposition of all classes of the Indian Community. I will not go into the details of these Acts, but I may merely allude to one or two of their clauses to give you an idea of this strange Draconian law. One clause is that if an Indian speaker or writer says or writes anything, in this country, which may bring the Government of India into contempt, that

Indian speaker or writer may be prosecuted for it—not here, not before a British judge or British jury, but on his return to India, before an Indian magistrate, who is also the head of the police. We in India have the very highest respect for authority and for the Government, but I am not sure that it is possible even to mention some of its recent doings without exciting some feelings other than respect! And if what I have said this morning has excited in the minds of my fair listeners any unamiable feelings towards the Government, I may look forward to the pleasure and the luxury of a prison home when I go back to India, whether it be six months hence or six years hence. (Laughter). Another clause is that magistrates are empowered to demand security from editors of news papers, and in default to imprison them with hard labour. (Shame). Imagine how much of the liberty of the Press would remain, even in this country, if every Police Magistrate were empowered to require security for good behaviour from editors of London and country papers, and in default of such security to cast the editors into prison. Such a suppression of the Press would be a folly and misfortune in England; it is ten times more a folly and a misfortune in India. For in this free country you have the House of Commons and a hundred free institutions to give expression to your sentiments. In India we have no House of Commons and no free institutions, and to suppress Press would be to suppress the only possible expression of public opinion. It would render despotism more despotic, it would silence

criticism, and suppress public opinion, it would endanger the empire. For if there be dissatisfaction in the land with certain measure of the Government, is it not far better and far safer that the people should speak it out—(Cheers)—and that you should know it—(Cheers)—that you should try to remove it—(Cheers)—than that the dissatisfaction should work in the dark and end in a catastrophe? This is the just, the statesmanlike, and the true Liberal policy, and this was the policy of the great Liberal leader who is departing from us. Twenty years ago the Tory Government were unwise enough to pass a law to gag the Vernacular Press of India. But when Mr. Gladstone came into power, I need hardly say the foolish Act was expunged from the Statute Book of India. And the people of India confidently trust and believe that when a worthy successor of Mr. Gladstone will come once again into power, the Gaggling Act now passed will once more cease to disgrace the Statute Book of India. (Cheers.) Ladies and gentlemen, I have one more word to say before I conclude. You are all aware that the present Government has declared its intention to demolish the self-government of London, and to destroy the great municipal powers enjoyed by the London County Council. You know how arduously the Tory leaders strove to influence the London elections in their favour, and how the great people of London have given the Government an answer whose import cannot be mistaken. And if the Government still persists in bringing forward a Bill, you may be quite sure that it is for the sake of

appearances, and for gracefully retiring from the attitude they were unwise enough to take up. So, gentlemen, the thunderbolt which was so assiduously manufactured for London by the Tory Government has really fallen on our devoted heads in Calcutta. Twenty-two years ago the Municipality of Calcutta received a constitution by which two-thirds of the members of the Corporation were elected by the taxpayers. The system has worked well, and the people receive this limited right. But the present Government sickens at the very idea of working through the people, and by means of a popular institution, and they have introduced a Bill in the Bengal Council, virtually taking away all real power from the elected Municipal Commissioners of the Capital of India! A blow is aimed at the root of self-government in Calcutta, and it is dreaded as the beginning of the end of all municipal self-government in India! Ladies and gentlemen, I thank you sincerely for the kind attention with which you have listened to me. Do not adopt this New Imperialism,—this method of coercion and repression—that will not save your Indian empire. Continue the policy which you adopted in the past, of trust and confidence in the people, of accepting the help and co-operation of the people in the management of their concerns, (Cheers,)—and the empire of India will be based on the firmest of all foundations, the affection and the loyalty of a great nation. (Loud cheers.)

V. DEATH OF MR. GLADSTONE.

[*Speech delivered at Derby on May, 20, 1898.*]

THE annual meeting of the National Reform Union was held at Derby on May 20, in the Temperance Hall. On account of the death of Mr. Gladstone only formal business was done and the annual report adopted. The Hon. Philip Stanhope, M.P., who presided, then spoke of the services which Mr. Gladstone had rendered to his country, and the loss sustained through his death. Mr. F. Maddison, M.P., spoke on behalf of the labour party, and he was followed by Mr. Romesh Dutt, who spoke on behalf of India. The following summary of his speech appeared in *India*.

Mr. Dutt said; I feel it a mournful duty to add a few words on this sad occasion, at the death of one whose name is as lovingly cherished in millions of grateful hearts in my own country as in this land where he lived and worked. (Cheers.) For the loss which has been sustained at the death of Mr. Gladstone is not a loss to England alone; it is a loss to the whole British Empire, and a loss to the cause of humanity. (Cheers). Your country, sir, is rich in illustrious men, whose genius has shed light and lustre in all parts of the world, men whose burning thoughts and burning words have raised a joyous echo in the remotest corners of the earth for freedom and for justice. But I doubt if even in this illustrious land there has lived within this century a man whose heart yearned more truly and nobly for the

oppressed and the suffering than Mr. Gladstone, or whose voice pleaded more eloquently for right and for justice. For half a century Mr. Gladstone's name has been identified with the cause of right and justice, and has been cherished by nations of the earth far beyond the limits of the British Empire. In Italy, in Greece, in Armenia, in Crete, in Bulgaria, in Montenegro, wherever nations have struggled against oppression and wrong, Mr. Gladstone's voice has made itself heard, Mr. Gladstone's influence has made itself felt, (Loud cheers). Sad recollections come to one's mind on the present mournful occasion. I had the great good fortune, sir, to be in this country thirty years ago, when the great election of 1868 brought the Liberals to power. And I had the proud privilege of seeing Mr. Gladstone when he sat as Prime Minister in the House of Commons for the first time. You know the noble results of that brilliant administration (1868-74), one of the noblest administrations of this century. The Irish Church was disestablished, the first Irish Land Act was passed, and a system of national and compulsory education was organised for this country. (Cheers). I was again in this country, in 1886, and was present at those great debates in the House of Commons which followed Mr. Gladstone's introduction of his first Irish Home Rule Bill. One again, in 1893, I was here, and was a silent and admiring witness to that prolonged and persevering fight by which the venerable statesman succeeded in getting his second Home Rule Bill passed by the House of Commons. Then Mr. Gladstone

retired from the scene of his labours to well-earned repose, but he never, to the last day of his life, ceased taking a lively interest in what he considered to be right and just. One private incident I wish to mention, because it illustrates the characteristic sympathy of Mr. Gladstone for the people of India. Last year, when Mr. Gladstone was living in retirement at Hawarden, I had the honour of sending him a copy of a small book on "England and India," in which I had indicated some needed reforms in the methods of Indian administration. The book had little interest for the general reader, but it had great interest for Mr. Gladstone, and I had the proud privilege of receiving a letter from him in his own handwriting, in which he thanked me for the gift, and expressed a hope that my little work would have some effect in awakening Englishmen to their duties towards their Indian fellow-subjects. (Cheers). But I do not wish to dwell on these personal recollections. I desire rather to refer in a few words to those great services which Mr. Gladstone has rendered to my country and to my countrymen. Not once or twice, but repeatedly, did the great and venerable statesman turn from the turmoil and bustle of British politics to render services to India, which have drawn towards him the hearts of my countrymen. In referring to some of these services, I will carefully avoid all political controversy, which is unsuited to this solemn occasion, and I will remember your injunction, sir, to exclude all discussion of party politics. I will barely mention one or two facts, and let the facts speak for themselves. You have all heard,

ladies and gentlemen, of the frontier war into which India drifted during the last year, and which has been happily brought to a close. Twenty years ago India drifted into another such war with Afghanistan, during the administration of Lord Beaconsfield. As you all remember, Lord Beaconsfield's Government fell, and Mr. Gladstone came into power in 1880; he terminated the Afghan war; and with that sense of justice and fairness which was a part of him he decided that as the Afghan war was more an Imperial than an Indian war, a portion of the cost of the war should be contributed by England. Five millions of English money were contributed from the Imperial Exchequer towards the cost of that war. I need hardly remind you that the decision of the present Government with regard to the recent frontier war has been different; the whole cost of this last war has been charged to India. I will cite another instance. Under Lord Beaconsfield's administration the Government of India thought fit to pass an Act to restrict the liberty of the Vernacular Press of India, a liberty which it had enjoyed under British rule for half a century or more. As I said, Mr. Gladstone came into power in 1880, and the Press-gagging Act was expunged from the Statute Book of India. On this point too, the decision of the present Government had been different; they have passed two new Acts this year to restrict the liberty of the Press in India. Permit me to cite yet one more instance illustrating the spirit of Mr. Gladstone's legislation for India. Within the same brief period of Mr. Gladstone's second administration, to which I have

already referred, and which lasted from 1880 to 1885, a noble and well-beloved Viceroy, the Marquis of Ripon, laid the foundation in India of what is known as local self-government. District boards and local boards were created; members were elected to these boards by the people, and they were entrusted with the management of roads, primary schools, dispensaries, and other local institutions. Tax-payers in towns were allowed to elect representatives, and Municipalities were allowed to elect chairmen. On this point also the spirit of Mr. Gladstone's administration differs from that of the present administration, for a Bill has been introduced this year by the present Government to take away from the Municipality of Calcutta those powers of self-government which it has enjoyed for many years past. Ladies and gentlemen, I need not allude to other instances, nor shall I on this solemn occasion discuss the current politics of India. India has fallen upon evil times, and we are passing through dangers which threaten to overwhelm us and wrest from us those humble rights and privileges which we have enjoyed in the past. We are filled with alarm, but not with despair. Standing—if I may say so—by the grave of the greatest statesman of this century, we cannot think that wise Government is dead even in the dependency of India. The great heart of England is sound to the core—(Cheers)—and England, which is just and true to her colonies all over the world, cannot be unjust and untrue to India—at least, as long as England can cherish and love and venerate the name and the memory of Mr. Gladstone. (Prolonged cheers.)

VI. THE NEW SEDITION LAW.

*[Speech made at a Conference of Indians held in
St. Martin's Town Hall, London,
on June 20, 1898.]*

THE following report of Mr. Romesh Dutt's speech is taken from a published report of the proceedings. He moved the following resolution.

"That this meeting condemns the new Sedition Law of India, (1) which makes invidious distinctions between different classes of Her Majesty's subjects; (2) which seeks to restrict the free discussion of Indian measures by Her Majesty's Indian subjects in England, by threats of prosecution on their return to India; (3) which takes away the liberty of the Press that has been enjoyed in India for over half a century, and substitutes a method of repression unworthy of the British Government; (4) which empowers magistrates in India, who are heads of the police, to demand security for good behaviour from editors of newspapers, to refuse such security when offered, and to send the editors to gaol with hard labour, *without trial for any specific offence*; (5) and lastly, which is based on suspicion and distrust against the people, and is thereby calculated to alienate the people and weaken the foundations of the British Empire in the East."

Mr. Dutt said: I feel some hesitation in rising to move this resolution because, as you are aware, I have spent the best years of my life in the service of the great Indian Government, and I feel a pardonable pride in having done my humble little in serving the cause of good government in India. (Cheers.) I felt, therefore, some hesitation in accepting an invitation to speak on the

subject of the blunders of the Indian Government. But the blunder on this occasion has been so serious, and is liable to be followed by consequences so disastrous, that I felt I should not be doing my duty towards my countrymen, or to the Government which I have served so long, if I did not on this occasion raise my warning voice against this unwise piece of legislation. (Loud cheers.) The idea of gagging the Press of India is not a happy one, not even a new one. As most of you are aware, about twenty years ago another Indian Viceroy, Lord Lytton, who waged another frontier war, conceived the idea of silencing criticism in India by means of gagging Act. He gagged the Vernacular Press by an Act in 1878, and you know what followed. The Liberal Government came into power two years after, and that Act was expunged from the Statute Book of India—(Cheers)—by that great and righteous statesman whose recent death has caused sorrow and lamentation in India as well as in England. Once more, now, we have a Viceroy who has passed another law, gagging this time not only the Vernacular Press but the whole Press, English and Vernacular, Native Indian and Anglo-Indian. I shall be very much surprised if this act remains very long on the Statute Book. I feel perfectly sure that, if the universal sorrow which has been manifested at the death of Mr. Gladstone indicates some appreciation of those righteous principles which guided his life, then there is not the remotest doubt that the leaders of Liberal thought in England will take an early opportunity of removing from the Statute Book an Act which is a disgrace to British Legislation.

(Cheers.) With these few remarks I think I will now at once go into some of the details of the Bill. You know that, about this time last year, a hint was received by some members of the House of Commons that it was contemplated to pass an Act to silence criticism in India and to gag the Press. The Leader of the Opposition put a question to the Secretary of State for India, asking him whether, before such an Act was passed, he would give the House of Commons an opportunity of knowing and discussing the details of the measure. Lord George Hamilton replied that the Indian Government was primarily responsible for the maintenance of peace in India, and the Indian Government, therefore, should have the initiative on all Indian measures. I particularly invite your attention to this reply, because I am going to show from the Blue-book which I hold in my hand that Lord George Hamilton has not acted in accordance with this statement. He has not allowed the Indian Government to act on its own opinion with regard to this Act, but he has in some respects forced the Indian Government to go further in the methods of repression than the Viceroy intended or desired to do. Soon after this, Parliament was prorogued, and the House did not re-open until February. Then the question was raised by one of our truest friends in the House of Commons, Mr. Herbert Roberts—(Cheers)—who discussed this proposed law in an eloquent and convincing speech. I will not repeat all the remarks he made on that occasion, but there is one sentence which I wish to read, because it truly describes the nature of the Act which has since been passed. He

said, "The result of the new law, if passed, will be to open up an endless vista of prosecutions against editors of newspapers in India." Another member who sits on the Government side of the House, Mr. Maclean, said, "You can govern India by your justice and generosity, and in case of need by force of arms, but you will never do it by preventing the free expression of opinion among the people." (Cheers.) What was the reply of Lord George Hamilton? He assured the House that the law was under the consideration of the members of the Viceroy's Council, and that it was not then the proper time to discuss it in the House of Commons. He said that after the law had been passed it would be published, if desired, and opportunity would then come for discussion. The papers have since been published, but no opportunity for discussion has been given; nor will it be given until the closing days of August, when the Indian budget will be discussed, as usual, before empty benches. (Cries of "Shame.") I am not at all surprised at this unwillingness of the Government to discuss it, because the Act contains provisions so antagonistic to the principles of British law that the most powerful Government we have known for many years may well hesitate to bring it before the House of Commons. The law consists of two amending Acts. One amends the Penal Code, and the other amends the Criminal Procedure Code. With regard to the Penal Code, section 4 is repealed and the following is substituted for it. "The provisions of this code apply also to any offence committed by any native Indian subject of Her Majesty in any place

without and beyond British India." That means that if any Native Indian subject of her Majesty criticises, in a way which the new law forbids, the acts of the Indian Government in this country, in this town of London, or in this hall this evening, the Indian Government takes the power to prosecute that Indian gentleman, not in this country, not before an English magistrate or an English jury, but when he goes back to India, four, five or six years hence. Then he will be taken before an Indian magistrate who is also the head of the local police. (Cries of "Shame.") In every civilised country the law declares that an offence shall be tried in the country in which it has been committed, but the Indian Government, in its anxiety to get all native Indian subjects within the clutches of the Indian law, have provided that, wherever the supposed offence is committed, the Government will wait until the supposed offender goes back to India, and will then haul him before an Indian magistrate, who is the head of the local police, in order to get him convicted. (Renewed cries of "Shame.") And mark, that this provision has been made specially to apply only to Native Indian subjects of Her Majesty. Therefore, if an Englishman should be so misguided as to write something in newspapers here, or to speak something which might increase the ill-feeling between race and race in India, there is no provision for prosecuting him in India. But if an Indian subject tries to reply, to him in a manner calculated to have the same effect, then he can be prosecuted when he goes back to India. Is this in conformity with the promises and

pledges so often given of equal justice to all classes of Her Majesty's subjects? (Cries of "No.") Now let me pass on to the main alteration made in the Penal Code, and that is the definition of the words "disaffection." The word was carefully defined by a lawyer whose name is as well-known in India as in this country, I mean Sir James Fitz-James Stephen. (Cheers.) He defined it so as not to include such disapprobation of the measures of the Government as is compatible with a disposition to render obedience to the lawful authority of the Government. That means that whatever our criticisms are—and I trust that all British subjects in all parts of the world will always criticise the acts of the Government, and so help the cause of good administration (Hear, hear)—so long as those criticisms are consistent with a desire to render obedience to lawful authority, there is no sedition. Will you believe it, that this most necessary and important provision has been struck out in the present law? And will you believe it, that the provision has been so struck out not because the Viceroy of India considered it necessary to do so for the safety of the Empire, but against the wishes and against the recommendation of the Viceroy by mandate of the Secretary of State for India? (Cries of "Shame.") The Viceroy said in his despatch that it was not necessary to amend Section 124A, since the highest courts in India had laid it down that the section did in substance reproduce the law of sedition in force in the United Kingdom. He added, "we consider that it is not necessary or desirable to amend the section. It might

be possible by redrafting it to make its meaning more clear, but we think it unwise to undertake any revision of it so long as the interpretation hitherto placed upon it by the Courts in India is maintained." To that Lord George Hamilton replied, "I have come to the conclusion that the section should be revised, and that being so it seems better to make the alteration simultaneously with the change of jurisdiction." Not only that, but Lord George Hamilton also sent out a suggestion of what the definition should be, namely, that "disaffection includes all feelings of ill-will." (Laughter.) So, if the remarks have just fallen from our Chairman about the currency question have excited in you any feelings of ill-will—that is disaffection! If the remarks which I have the misfortune of making with regard to the new sedition law are exciting in you any feelings of ill-will—that is sedition! If the remarks which my esteemed friend Mr. Bose may make later on about the proposed Municipal law for Calcutta excites any feelings of ill-will—that is sedition! And if the remarks of my esteemed friend Mr. Khalil about the Indian frontier war produces such an effect on your minds—that is sedition! (Load laughter.) This is how the Act was proposed to be altered, and although the Viceroy did not desire it, although he thought it "unwise," yet it is probably not known to you that legislation in India is to a great extent carried on by "mandates" from this country, and the Viceroy had virtually to accept the orders of the Secretary of State for India. (Cries of "Shame.") The definition finally adopted was that "disaffection includes

disloyalty and all feelings of enmity." It leaves the offence dangerously vague and undefined. I have now only a few other remarks to make about the important changes in the Criminal Procedure Code. One of the most startling of these is that which classes the editors of newspapers with vagabonds, professional thieves, and professional burglars—(Laughter)—in so far that a magistrate is empowered to demand from them security for good behaviour, to refuse such security when offered, and to send them to gaol with hard labour, without any specific offence having been proved. (Cries of "Shame.") For you will understand that if any specific offence is proved proceedings are brought under the Penal Code. If no specific offence is proved, then, on vague information, on vague stories heard by the Magistrate, he can fall back on the Criminal Procedure Code, and send an editor to prison with hard labour. The Government of India had hitherto empowered the Magistrates to take this course with regard to notorious bad characters. I myself, as an Indian Magistrate, have exercised this law for about 20 years. When I found crime increasing, and the universal suspicion of villagers pointing to a particular man as the author of the crime, I have called on that man to give substantial security for his good behaviour, and on his failing to do this I have sent him to gaol with hard labour. This law has so long been reserved for habitual offenders, for notorious thieves, burglars, and extortioners. It has now been extended to editors of newspapers. (A Voice : "A downright shame.") Can you conceive a county Magistrate in

this country calling upon the editor of the *Times* or the *Daily Chronicle*, the *Daily News* or the *Manchester Guardian* to give security for good behaviour on the strength of information he had received, and on the editor failing to satisfy the Magistrate in regard to security, sending him to gaol? (Laughter.) There is one other amendment to which I wish to allude. Hitherto all these offences relating to sedition have been tried by experienced judges. Now, this important class of offences are to go before district officers—men of high education and responsible position, no doubt, but men who represent the Government in their districts, and who are mainly responsible for the peace of their districts. So that virtually it comes to this, that the man who is the head of the police and the virtual prosecutor in all criminal cases, is to try editors or bind them down for good behaviour. I can only say that this condition of the law reminds me very strongly of the law which prevailed in England 200 or 300 years ago for stamping out witchcraft. They took an old woman suspected of being a witch and threw her into a deep pond. If she floated, that was considered a proof that she was a witch, and she was burned at the stake; if she sank, that proved that she was innocent, and she only died of drowning. (Loud laughter.) So in the case of editors, if any specific offence is proved against them, they are convicted and sent to gaol under the Penal Code. If no specific offence is proved against them then they are not convicted, but are sent to gaol for failing to furnish security for good behaviour under the Criminal Procedure Code.

("Shame.") I have only to add a word or two. I have told you that I have passed the best years of my life in the service of the Indian Government, and for many years I was in charge of important districts which in area and population far exceed the limits of an ordinary county in this country. Being thus isolated, as a Government official, in the midst of vast populations, I felt that my own security, and the security of the Government which I humbly tried to represent, rested on the confidence of the people in the justice and fair play of the British Government. It is with deep regret that I have to say that I can hardly remember any time—and my memory goes back to the time of the Mutiny—when the confidence of the people of India in the justice and fair play of English rulers was so shaken as it has been within the last two years. (Cheers, and a Voice : "Very true.") It is a calamity that this should be so. It is a grave calamity that the very foundation of British rule in India, our confidence in the justice of English rule and English administration, should be shaken ; but it is a still greater calamity that the British Government itself should in this Sedition Law show its weakness and its want of trust in the people. (Cheers.) In the interests of my countrymen and of the Government of my country, I do ask those men who shape our destinies to turn back from this policy of coercion and repression, and to turn to that policy of conciliation and trust and confidence in the people by which the British Empire in India has been established, and by which alone it can be maintained. (Loud cheers.)

VII. THE CALCUTTA MUNICIPAL BILL.

*[Speech delivered at a great meeting in Manchester,
on November 22, 1898. The Bishop of
Hereford presided.]*

THE following summary of Mr. Dutt's speech is taken from *India*. Mr. Romesh Dutt said : They had listened with pleasure and instruction to the eloquent speeches which had explained and insisted on the duty of Englishmen to deal with native races in all parts of the British Empire, with justice and equity. For himself, coming from India, he could say that he had listened to them with gratitude. Such eloquent advocacy of just and fair dealing was needful and beneficial ; and there never was a time within this generation when it was so needful as at the present day. In India it would almost seem as if we were going backwards from the path of progress which we had trod so long, and that the rights and privileges accorded to the people by wise statesmen in the past were about to be withdrawn under the influence of a New Imperialism ! The Empire of India was built up by the co-operation of the people, by Indian soldiers who had fought side by side with English soldiers, and by the help of races and nations who had rallied round the only power which could give the people peace and security and civilised government. But lately they had passed through evil times ; the famine of the last year was the tenth great famine which had marked the Queen's

reign in India ; and these ten famines were estimated to have carried off ten or twelve millions of their Indian fellow-subjects. But what was perhaps even more alarming than the famine was the change which had come over the spirit of British rule in India, and the want of trust and confidence in the people which betrayed itself in measures of coercion and repression. There can be no wise and successful administration in India with its vast population without the advice and help and co-operation of the people themselves. (Applause.) It was not the officers who went out to India who were to blame ; he had himself had the honour to belong to the great Civil Service of India for 26 years of his life, and he would say this ; take the Indian Civil Servants with all their faults, they were as fine a body of administrators as they sent out to any part of the world. It was not the men, it was the system which was to blame—(Applause)—and the system was not improving with the lapse of time, but was becoming more distrustful, more unsympathetic, and more despotic under the perfervid Jingoism of the present day. He would give them one illustration of the manner in which popular administration had succeeded in India in the past, and how, nevertheless, the present Government seemed bent upon withdrawing popular rights and privileges, and reverting to methods of despotism and distrust in the people. Twenty-two years ago, when India was under the administration of Lord Northbrook, the ratepayers of Calcutta were allowed the right of electing two-thirds of their Municipal Commissioners, the remaining third being appointed by the

Government. We in this country should not consider it a great concession to the metropolis of India to allow it to elect two-thirds of their Municipal Commissioners ; but they in India were thankful for small mercies, and during the last twenty-two years they had cherished this as one of the most valued rights they had secured under British rule in India. How the elected Commissioners had done their municipal work was a matter of history, they had cleansed the city, improved the drainage and extended the water supply, and in the words of Sir Antony MacDonnell, one of the most successful administrators of India, they had worked with a zeal which rose to the level of devotion. Men who had entered young had grown grey in the service of the town ; and the best educated and most patriotic citizens took a pride in their work, and in their position as representatives elected by their townsmen. Calcutta was not an ideally sanitary town yet, but Calcutta was nevertheless one of the healthiest places now in Bengal, the value of land had doubled, and thousands of people came to the city annually from the surrounding country to improve their health. More than this, when a few cases of plague were recently imported into Calcutta from Bombay, they were promptly stamped out, partly through the superior sanitary arrangements of Calcutta, and partly through the zealous and devoted exertions of the elected Commissioners of the city. (Applause.) They would think that after this good work of twenty-two years, after saving the town from the horrors of a plague, the ratepayers of Calcutta had deserved some extension of their rights and

privileges, some broadening of the scheme of self-government in the city. But would they believe it, at the present moment there was a Bill before the Bengal Council virtually withdrawing from the citizens the right of self-government ! It was a wanton measure of injustice to the people of Calcutta, and it was felt as a confiscation of the people's rights. He had had enough experience of Indian administration to know what the result of the change would be ; they could not administer the concerns of 860,000 people, which was the population of Calcutta, without the co-operation of the people themselves and the good work which had been done in the past in the metropolis of India would be ruined. He appealed to them on behalf of his countrymen and not to ruin Indian administration by rejecting the willing and zealous co-operation of the people themselves. (Applause.)

[The following note on the past history of Calcutta was referred to by the speaker in course of his speech.]

Commissioners appointed by the Government, 1856. They failed. Act XXVIII. of 1856 vested the administration of Calcutta in three Commissioners who "shall be appointed by the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, and shall be removable at his pleasure." The Commissioners so appointed by the Government failed to improve the town, and Mr. (afterwards Sir John) Strachey thus describes the town in 1863 :—

"With regard to the northern or native division of Calcutta which contains some hundred thousand people, it is no figure

of speech but the simple truth to say that no language can adequately describe its abominations. In the filthiest quarters of the filthiest towns that I have seen in other parts of India or in other countries, I have never seen anything which can be for a moment compared with the filthiness of Calcutta. This is true not merely of the inferior portions of the town, or of the byeways and places inhabited by the poor classes, but it is true of the principal thoroughfares and of the quarters filled with the houses of the richest and most influential portion of the native community. If a plain unvarnished description of the northern division of Calcutta, bordered by the horrible open drains in which all the filth of the city stagnates and putrifies, were given to the people of England, I believe they would consider the account altogether incredible."

Justices of the Peace appointed by the Government, 1863. They failed. Act. VI. of 1863 was then passed by which the Government handed over the administration of the town to Justices of the Peace appointed by itself. The Justices did something to improve the town, and introduced water-works, but failed to improve it effectually. Dr. Payne, the Health Officer of the town, wrote thus in 1876 :—

"It is impossible to conceive a more perfect combination of all the evils of crowded city-life in the primitive filthiness and disorder than is presented in the native portion of Calcutta. Dirt in the most intense and noxious forms that a dense population can produce covers the ground, saturates the water, infects the air, and finds in the habits and incidents of the people's lives every possible facility for re-entering their bodies ; while ventilation could not be more shunned in their houses if the climate were arctic instead of tropical. If then Calcutta be not a deadly place, filth in its utmost intensity must be innocuous, and sanitation a pretentious sham."

Élection System introduced in 1876 as a remedy. Act IV. of 1876 was then introduced by

SIR R. TEMPLE, then Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, and passed into law. It provided that the Corporation of Calcutta was to consist of 72 members, 48 of whom were to be elected by the ratepayers and the remaining 24 appointed by the Local Government.

How the Election System worked between 1876 and 1884. In 1884 a Commission was appointed "to enquire into certain matters connected with the sanitation of the town of Calcutta." Two of the members of the Commission point out defects (which have since been remedied), but did not recommend any constitutional changes. On the contrary they suggested the inclusion of the suburbs of Calcutta within the town, which has since been done. The third member of the Commission, Mr. H. J. S. Cotton, now Chief Commissioner of Assam, thus spoke of the Corporation :—

"The Corporation of Calcutta as a representative body commands the confidence of the vast majority of the ratepayers; it has already done very much in the direction of sanitary reform; it has not retrograded in giving effect to a single sanitary improvement; stimulated by the healthy action of public opinion and profiting by the greater experience gained year by year, it has afforded, by the systematic enterprise of the past three years, the most solid guarantee that it will continue to advance on the path of the progress.

Favourable Opinion recorded in 1890 by Sir Steuart Bailey, then Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal. The amalgamation of the suburbs was effected by Act II. of 1888, which provided that the Corporation would consist of 75 members, 50 of whom were to be elected by the ratepayers, 15 to be appointed by the Local Government, and 10 to be elected by

European commercial bodies, and the Port Commissioners. How well the Commissioners, thus variously elected and appointed, worked with their Chairman is shewn by the following extract from a resolution recorded in 1890 by Sir Steuart Bailey, then Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, on the retirement of Sir Henry Harrison, who had been Chairman of Calcutta for 9 years.

"For 9 years he was Chairman of the Corporation, and the useful administration of the affairs of the municipality during this long period, the firm financial credit of the Commissioners, the innumerable sanitary reforms effected, specially the extension of the water-supply and the conservancy of *bustees*, the increase in material prosperity in the city which, in consequence of these reforms, has shown itself in so marked a degree that the value of land in Calcutta generally may be said to have doubled, the re-organisation and re-construction of nearly every department of work, the hearty zeal and co-operation with which the Commissioners as a body now unite with the Executive to advance the welfare of the city—and attitude for which they were not always distinguished, but which is in itself the best testimony to the capacity of a chairman—the methodical and systematic development of civic administration in all departments, are a sufficient and lasting tribute to the manner in which Sir Henry Harrison has discharged the duties of his responsible, difficult, and thankless office. His name will always be honorably associated with the growth of municipal institutions in the Metropolis."

Favourable Opinion recorded in 1893 by Sir Antony MacDonnell, then Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal. The Municipal Commissioners of Calcutta, the majority of whom were elected by the ratepayers, continued to effect sanitary improvements in their great city; and the opinion recorded by Sir Antony MacDonnell in 1893 is a valuable testimony to their zeal, efficiency, and devotion :—

"Sir Antony MacDonnell has perused with much interest the report reviewed in the preceding paragraphs ; it records the execution of much useful work, especially in the direction of sanitation and of structural improvements, such as the extension of drainage and water-supply and the improvement of the *buslees* ; and for their share in carrying out these measures, the thanks of the Lieutenant-Governor are due to the executive officers of the Corporation, the Engineer and the Health Officer. The Commissioners themselves have, as a whole, displayed a care and attention to their duties which is very meritorious, and has in some cases risen to the level of devotion.

Favourable Opinion expressed in 1898 by Sir John Woodburn, present Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal. The Municipal Commissioners of Calcutta, the majority of whom are elected by the rate-payers, have continued up to the present day to perform their work with efficiency and zeal, and will appear from the following words spoken in November last by the present Lieutenant-Governor :—

"They are entitled to all the credit—and it is a high one—of realising the value and necessity of the great schemes which have been drawn up for their approval, such as those for the drainage of the city and the construction of Harrison Road. They have not shrunk from the heavy taxation which was needed to bring these beneficent projects into effect, and I have myself had evidence of the high public spirit and laborious circumspection which many members of the Corporation bring to the discharge of their municipal duties. These are qualities which not in Calcutta alone have elicited my respect, and it is a pleasure to me to have this opportunity of acknowledging them.

VIII. THE CURRENCY QUESTION.

*Evidence given before the Currency Committee
on November, 30, 1898.*

PRESENT :

The Rt. Hon. SIR HENRY H. FOWLER, G.C.S.I., M.P. (in the Chair).

Sir JOHN MUIR, Bart.

Sir FRANCIS MOWATT, K.C.B.

Sir DAVID BARBOUR, K.C.S.I.

Sir CHARLES CROSTHWAITE, K.C.S.I.

Sir ALFRED DENT, K.C.M.G.

Mr. ROBERT CAMPBELL.

Mr. EVERARD HAMBRO.

Mr. W. H. HOLLAND.

Mr. F. C. LE MARCHANT.

Mr. ROBERT CHALMERS, *Secretary.*

*[Examination of witness, Mr. Dutt, by Sir Henry
Fowler, Chairman.]*

10,628. You were selected for the Indian Civil Service at the open competition held in London in 1869?—That is so.

10,629. You joined the service in 1871?—That is so.

10,630. Will you tell us your experience in the Indian Civil Service?—After serving in the lower grades, I held appointments as District Magistrate and Collector between 1881 and 1894 in various districts in Lower Bengal, and as Divisional Commissioner in Burdwan and Orissa Divisions between 1894 and 1897 after 26 years' service.

10,631. The Departments that you were in did not deal specifically with either currency or accounts?—No.

10,632. But they gave you the opportunity of studying the condition of the agricultural labouring classes?—Yes.

10,633. And it is with that experience and your knowledge of Indian affairs that you approach this question?—That is so.

10,634. I will first ask you what you thought of the closing of the mints. Had you any opinion at that time on that point?—We were not consulted. I hardly knew anything about it.

10,635. You were in India when the step was taken?—No; in 1893 I was in this country on furlough.

10,636. You are aware, I suppose, that the rupee had been steadily falling for a large number of years?—Yes.

10,637. At the time when the mints were closed in 1893, they were closed on the ground of the fall of the rupee being a very serious danger to the financial position of India?—I heard that vaguely in this country.

10,638. Since you have been here, you have thoroughly mastered the new proposals of the Indian Government?—In a general way, yes.

10,639. Will you just say, in your own language, what you would like to say first as to the effect of those proposals?—The first effect is likely to be this, that it would lead to general increase of taxation in India. Because all the taxes are paid in rupees, and, by closing the mints, the value of the rupee has been enhanced, and, if the same number of rupees are taken now as were taken before, it means a real increase in taxation.

10,640. Have you any figures as to what the raising

of prices has been? When you went to India in 1871 the price of silver was $65\frac{5}{16}d.$ an ounce, and the average rate at which the Secretary of State sold his bills was $1s. 10\frac{3}{4}d.$ per rupee?—Yes.

10,641. The rate began to fall, I think, materially in 1878 or 1879, and, when the mints were closed in 1892-93, it had gone down to $1s. 2\frac{1}{2}d.$?—That is about it.

10,642. That is a fall of $8d.$ in the rupee in those years?—Yes.

10,643. Did the proposals of the Government of India to arrest the fall of the rupee have the effect of raising its value?—Yes, I think it was $1s. 2d.$, if I remember rightly, in 1893, and it is now nearly $1s. 4d.$, so that within this last five years the value of the rupee has been enhanced by $2d.$ as compared with gold. With regard to the fall from 1871 to 1893, I may be allowed to explain that the Indian Government and the Provincial Governments got a natural increase in their revenue in consequence of the fall. The land revenue and other revenues went up in this way. The prices in rupees rose all round; the prices of food grains rose, and, as the Government in its recurring settlements made that a ground of enhancement—because the Government as landlord is entitled to an increase of rent if the price of the produce rises—there was a natural increase in land revenue. Then also with regard to the income-tax; as the incomes, estimated in rupees, went up, the Government got an increase of the income tax; so that, while there was a fall in the value of the rupee from 1871 to

1893, Government was directly, and in a natural way, getting an increase in the revenues as estimated by the rupee.

10,644. When you talk of an increase in the income-tax, will you explain that further?—Suppose a man's income in 1871 was 1,000 rupees a year. If his real income remained the same, then, by the falling of the rupee, his income as valued by the rupee would be something like 1,200 rupees.

10,645. What do you mean by his real income?—His income estimated by the produce of the country. I am speaking of people outside those in Government employment—not members of the Government service. I am speaking of merchants and traders, agriculturists, and farmers—people outside Government employ.

10,646. You think there was such a rise in prices that, practically, profits were increased to that extent?—Profits as estimated by the rupee. If a man's real profits remained the same, the value of the rupee having fallen, his profits, as estimated by the rupee, must have risen. If his income was 1,000 rupees in 1871, and if the rupee had in the meantime depreciated 8*z*, his income in 1893, as estimated by the rupee, must have risen, and, therefore, the Government would get an increase in the income-tax obtained from that man.

10,647. Do you mean that they would get more rupees?—They would get more rupees. The depreciation of the rupee has not been a loss to Government, because in this way there is a general increase in taxation without making the burden heavier on the people—there:

is a general increase in taxation as estimated by the rupee.

10,648. Do you think that in India itself—I am not talking now of external trade or payments out of India—the internal trade has increased?—There has been an increase in the price of food grains within my experience. Between 1871 and 1893 there was a considerable rise in the price of rice.

10,649. Was that accompanied by an increase in wages?—To some extent; and the landlords were able to increase their rents, and the Government in all cases, except where there were permanent settlements, were able to increase their land-revenue on the basis of an increase of rents.

10,650. What would have been the position of things if the rupee had remained stationary?—Then the increase of the land-revenue would not have been so marked, as estimated by rupees. I will try to explain myself in this way. Suppose the Government land-revenue of a district not permanently settled was 3 lakhs in 1871. In the 22 years between 1871 and 1893, the prices of food grains rose; where rice sold at 1 rupee 8 annas per maund in 1871, it sold in 1893 at, say, 2 rupees per maund. In the same way there is an increase in the prices of wheat, barley, jawar, and bajra, and all the principal staple foods of India; there was a general increase of prices in all food grains. Therefore, when the Government came to revise the settlements, it found that there was a general increase in the prices of food grains all over the country, and obtained a legitimate

increase of probably a lakh of rupees solely on the ground of increase in prices. If there had not been that increase, the Government might have raised the land-revenue a little, but certainly not so much, if prices had remained stationary.

10,651. I was dealing with the connexion between the falling of the rupee and the rise of prices. Do you consider, for instance, the opening up of the European markets to wheat is a factor?—It is a very small factor.

10,652. Do you think the increased consumption of rice is a factor?—I do not think so, for there has been an increased cultivation. I think the main reason of the rise in prices is that the rupee has depreciated between 1871 and 1893. And the land-revenue, as estimated in rupees, has increased.

10,653. Supposing, instead of the Government arresting by their action the fall of the rupee, they had allowed the fall to go on, and that the rupee had gone down to 6*d.*, what do you think would have been the effect of that?—I hardly think it would be possible; but, if it did go to 6*d.*, it would not have made any difference, because the land-revenue would rise at the very next settlement; the rise in the prices of food grains would be so considerable that, without any effort on their part, the Government would get a natural increase in the income-tax, and a natural increase in the proceeds of almost every tax in the country.

10,654. (*Sir F. Mowatt.*) You are assuming that the prices would immediately follow the fall of the rupee? —Yes.

10,655. It is on that assumption that your opinion is founded?—Either immediately or within a short time; and my experience during the last 26 years in Bengal has been that, as the rupee has gone down, prices have risen.

10,656. (*Chairman.*) Will you apply that now to the salt-tax?—I do not remember the incidence of the salt-tax.

10,657. The salt-tax is now $2\frac{1}{2}$ rupees per maund. That is a fixed sum?—The Government would be quite justified in increasing the tax in proportion to the fall of the rupee.

10,658. Then take the excise duties and apply the same argument—I mean the duties on spirits and liquor. I want to see where you think the Government income would rise?—In this way. On the liquor distilled in Bengal the Government imposes a duty of something like 2 rupees for each gallon distilled. When the rupee depreciated and food grains all rose in price, the Government would be justified in imposing 2 rupees 8 annas, or 2 rupees 12 annas, or 3 rupees.

10,659. That is dealing with what the Government might do, but that is not what has actually occurred. I understand your point to be this, that automatically, by the reduction in the value of the rupee, the revenue has increased?—In most cases, excepting in those cases where the Government imposes an arbitrary sum, in which cases the Government has the power to increase that sum, and it would be justified in increasing that sum in correspondence with the fall of the rupee.

10,662. Now, your next point, I think, is that the Government have improperly appreciated the currency?—That is my argument, and I find that that argument was taken up, as no doubt this Committee is aware, in 1879 in a letter to the India Office, by the Treasury. I have an extract from that here. This question was discussed in 1879, and the India Office received a letter from the Treasury from which I will read this extract: “In general, the object of such Governments”—this is in reference to those Governments which have depreciated the currency in order to reduce their liabilities—“has been to diminish the amount they have to pay to their creditors. In the present case the object of the Indian Government appears to be to increase the amount they have to receive from their tax-payers. My Lords fail to see any real difference in the character of the two transactions.” That is in a letter dated 24th November 1879. The proposal of the Indian Government to raise the value of the current coin of India, and thus to obtain from the ratepayers a really larger revenue, without ostensibly increasing the tax, appears to me to be open to the same objections. The injustice and the hardship are none the less real and none the less oppressive by reason of the fact that, instead of raising the amount of taxes 30 or 40 per cent, the proposal is to raise the value of the rupee to the same extent, or to keep the value of the rupee high to the same extent. Such a proposal does not disguise the real increase in taxation, and does not minimise either its pressure or its arbitrariness.

10,661. Your first objection is that practically this means a general increase of taxation?—Yes, over and above the natural increase.

10,662. Then in the next place, you object to it with especial reference to the land revenue?—Yes; the Government of India is the receiver of land-revenues in India. It receives fixed revenues from landlords in Bengal, and rents from actual cultivators in most other parts of India. I assume that, when the value of the rupee is artificially raised, or artificially kept up to that point to which it has already been raised, the Government will not be disposed to make a proportionate reduction in the amount of its rents and land-revenues.

10,663. But what do you say about the fall that has already taken place in the value of the rupee since these rents were fixed?—Do you mean in Madras or Bombay?

10,664. Anywhere?—In consequence of the fall of the value of the rupee, the rents have already been increased, as I explained just now.

10,665. That would not apply in the first place to the permanent settlements?—No, I am speaking of other places. Settlements are continually going on.

10,666. In individual cases?—In some parts settlements have taken place; in others, settlements are going to take place; so that, if there has been a rise in prices through the fall of the rupee, the Government has either got the advantage of it, or is going to get the advantage of it. But, by increasing the price of the rupee, you, not automatically but suddenly, raise the land-revenues all over India. Take Bengal, for

instance, where the revenues are permanently settled ; some zemindar has engaged to pay, say, 50,000 rupees as the revenue of his zemindary, and he has paid that sum since the permanent settlement—since 1793 ; now the rupee is raised from 1s. 2d. to 1s. 4d., it may possibly go higher, but it has been raised from 1s. 2d. to 1s. 4d. Therefore, in place of the 50,000 rupees which he has been paying since the permanent settlement, by raising the rupee 2d. you impose a real addition to the amount of revenue paid by him.

10,667. But you must go further back. When the Cornwallis settlement was made, the rupee was worth really more than 2s. The Government, of course, have lost by that ?—In the permanent-settlement tracts the Government have lost and the people have gained, and the agriculturists have greatly benefited by that. The condition of the Bengal agriculturist has greatly improved on account of the rise in prices, and the Government has derived advantage from the increased prosperity of the cultivators.

10,668. But do you not think the zemindars have increased their rent ?—To some extent they have, but the great benefit is derived by the Government themselves, and not by the landlord. In other parts of India—leaving out those places where the revenue has been permanently settled—the land-revenue has adjusted itself, or is going shortly to adjust itself, according to the rise of prices. Now by suddenly increasing the value of the rupee, there is a further increase in land-revenue. In Madras, for instance, the land-revenue of a district

may have been 3 lakhs of rupees ; it will be 3 lakhs of rupees now, but of rupees of an enhanced value. Therefore, by this action of the Government, there is a sudden increased demand by the Government over and above the natural increase which it has received already. In order to explain this better, I have prepared this table of figures, which has been placed before every member of the Committee, which will show that in nearly every division in India there was a fall in the prices of food grains immediately after the closing of the mints, in the Punjab, in the North-West Provinces, in Bengal, in Bombay, in Madras, in Assam, and in the Central Provinces. I have compiled these figures from the book called "Prices and Wages in India," annually published by the Government of India ; and I have given the reference to the pages from which I have compiled my figures. [*For this Table, see Appendix.*]

10,669. You say there has been a fall in prices since the closing of the mints ?—Immediately after the closing of the mints.

10,670. (*Mr. O'Connor.*) The prices of 1892 were extraordinarily high. (*Witness.*) I have taken 1893-94 together, and 1894-95 together, and I find that in every division almost there has been a fall in prices. I have taken division by division, in order to show that there is not only a fall in the different provinces, but that there is a fall in prices all over India in almost every division. I cannot myself explain that in any other way excepting by imputing it to the closing of the mints. I was in Bengal myself in 1892, 1894, and 1895 (I was absent

in 1893½ and the fall in prices in 1894-95 was certainly not owing to any abundant harvest, because there was scarcity in some parts of Bengal in those years, and there was scarcity in the North-West Provinces, so that naturally you would expect that prices would range high in 1894 and 1895. Instead of that, prices apparently fell in all parts of India. What I am driving at is this, that, although the prices fell, the cultivators had to pay the same amount in rupees. When they sold their wheat, say, at 13 seers for the rupee, they paid a certain rent; when prices fell to 15 or 16 or 17 seers the rupee, they got less by the sale of their wheat, but they had still to pay the same rent. In other words, it was an indirect increase in the rental all over.

10,671. (*Chairman.*) Supposing prices had risen?—The zemindars would have very soon got an increase.

10,672. But take the other parts of India, where there are no zemindars?—Then the Government would have got an increase in the next settlement. The cultivators would have got an advantage for some few years, and then the Government would have had its own share.

10,673. Sooner or later, you say, it would amount to raising the land-revenue?—Yes, according to the rise in prices.

10,674. Then you say that there is another and a still graver objection to the proposal. Will you explain that?—The millions of agriculturists and labourers in India are indebted to moneylenders and mahajans; and the debt is, in many cases, reckoned in rupees, and not

in grain. To artificially enhance the value of the rupee, or to fix the value at the rate to which it has been already artificially raised, is to increase the indebtedness of the cultivators and labourers of India to moneylenders and mahajans. The measure serves to add to the profits of the prosperous classes who feed on the distresses of the poor, and to add to the weight of the millstone which the poor and indebted classes carry round their necks. Throughout the bazaars and money markets of India, the effect of raising the value of the rupee is to add to the profits of the rich moneylender, and to enhance the liabilities of the poor cultivator who has a debt. I may only add to this, that even this point was touched upon in that Treasury letter to which I referred just now. In paragraph 20 of that letter from the Treasury to the Indian Office, dated 24th November 1879, there is this passage :—"This relief"—that is the relief to those people who get their pay from the Government—"will be given at the expense of the Indian taxpayer, and with the effect of increasing every debt or fixed payment in India, including debts due by ryots to moneylenders." That is exactly the point I have tried to explain.

10,675. What was the state of things when that proposal was made? The then value of the rupee was 1s. 8d., and the Government proposed, did they not, that it should be at once raised to 2s. ?—Yes.

10,676. Is it not against that proposal that the Treasury letter is directed ?—I believe that is so, and I think what we are doing now is much the same thing.

10,677. That was a distinct proposal to raise the

value of the rupee, which had been for a long time, and was then, about 1s. 8d., to 2s. At the present time the proposal is to prevent any further fall?—But it has been raised by the closing of the mints from 1s. 2d. to nearly 1s. 4d., and the proposal is to keep it at that.

10,678. Assuming it to be fixed at 1s. 4d., that would be raising it, that is what you mean?—Yes, then I was referring to paragraph 18 of the same letter, in which the Lords of the Treasury go on to say, "It alters every contract and every fixed payment in India." Virtually what it is proposed to do now would have very much the same effect. If the value of the rupee is kept at its enhanced rate by the action of the Government, it really adds to the indebtedness of the cultivator to the moneylender. The cultivator's income estimated in rupees has gone down; it went down during those two years, 1894—95, but then, of course, prices rose again during the famine years. I have not taken famine prices into consideration, but it stands to reason that, if the value of the rupee is artificially raised, the income of the cultivator, estimated in rupees, must fall, but his indebtedness to the moneylender, where it is reckoned in rupees, remains the same. Where he is indebted to the extent of 100 rupees to the moneylender, the moneylender will claim his 100 rupees, although the 100 rupees now represent a larger quantity of rice or wheat than before. Probably the whole produce of the field was 100 rupees before, now the produce of the field would not amount to 100 rupees, but the cultivator is still indebted to the extent of 100 rupees; so that, reckoned

by his income, (and the income of the cultivator is in the produce of the soil) his indebtedness to the mahajan is increased all round.

10,679. You assume that prices fall as soon as the exchange value of the rupee is raised?—I assume that, because it must be so; and because our experience of those two years shows that it has been so in the past. In the years 1894—95, from the figures that I have given, it is clear that immediately after the closing of the mints the value of crops went down all over India; and it stands to reason that, if the value of the rupee is enhanced, the value of everything, estimated in rupees must fall. When the rupee is artificially raised, the value of everything must fall. Therefore, by the sale of the produce of his field, whether it is rice or wheat, the cultivator will get, in the number of rupees, less than he got before.

10,680. What have you to say about silver hoarding?—Before leaving this, I would ask permission to say that I think it is sometimes stated that the indebtedness of the agriculturists to the moneylenders is in grain and not in money. I wish to explain that it is so in some cases, but in many cases the indebtedness is in money. In many cases that I know of, in Bengal villages, the debt is estimated in rupees, and the debt is not contracted all of a sudden. Just after the harvest, probably, the cultivator pays off his debt, and then he goes on borrowing 5 rupees or 10 rupees from time to time. When he has to marry a son or daughter, or has some domestic expense of some kind, he goes to the

moneylender and gets money advanced till the harvest time comes, and then much of the debt is cleared off. But what I want to point out is that much of his indebtedness is in rupees. There is a portion of it in grain, but much of the cultivator's indebtedness, in Bengal at any rate, is in rupees. Therefore, to that extent, his indebtedness is increased by your artificially adding to the value of the rupee.

10,681. You are assuming that the debt has all been contracted at one specific period and is all going to be paid off at another?—It is annually contracted or runs on.

10,682. But, for instance, during the last 12 months the rupee has been at 1s. 4d. In 1893 it was at 1s. 3d. nearly, and in 1894 it was 1s. 2½d. Then it went down to 1s. 1d. ; then it began to rise, and now it is at 1s. 4d., you may say. But the people who contracted those debts contracted them when the rupee was worth 1s. 4d. or more, and that extends back?—But the debt is renewed from time to time.

10,683. It is renewed in rupees?—Yes, with the interest, and it is paid off also in the harvest time, if there is a bumper crop.

10,684. I want you to explain this. Supposing it is an annual loan ; suppose a man raises money on his crops and pays his debt when the crops are sold, he pays and receives according to the then rate?—Yes.

10,685. The injustice would arise if the man borrowed when the rupee was worth 1s. and had to pay it off when the rupee was worth 1s. 4d. ; but that cannot

occur in one year?—The practice is not uniform. Sometimes the loan is annual, sometimes it is for two or three years.

10,686. But so far, with the exception of three or four years between 1892 and the present time, the rate was always above 1s. 4d. ?—Yes.

10,687. Every liability in India, prior to 1892, was raised on the basis of more than 1s. 4d. ?—Yes.

10,688. Therefore—I am assuming this for the sake of argument—fixing the rupee at 1s. 4d. would not be an injury, on your hypothesis ?—For those old debts, no.

10,689. Nor would it be for those debts contracted in the last two years when the rupee was at 1s. 4d. ?—I did not know it was 1s. 4d. in the last two years.

10,690. It has been steadily rising. Your argument, whether sound or unsound, would only apply to debts contracted in the three years 1894, 1895, and 1896 ?—Yes.

10,691. And to settlements made in those three years ?—Yes, and a great portion of the settlements and debts now current among the agricultural population of India are of those years. The civil law is that, unless a debt is revived within three years, it lapses, and most of the current agricultural debts in India are of the last three years, and those debts have been virtually increased by enhancing the value of the rupee.

10,692. Now will you come to the matter of trinkets?—All that the poor people in India can possibly save in years of good harvest is saved, not in

savings banks, which do not exist in India for the poor, but in silver jewellery and trinkets for their women. Practically, all the spare wealth which the cultivating and labouring classes have in India is in this form; and, in years of scarcity and famine, all this silver, or a great part of it, is sold in the affected districts in order to procure food grains. The proposal of the Government of India is virtually one to confiscate about a third of the poor man's savings in India. The value of the rupee being artificially raised, the silver bangle or bracelet in which the cultivator has invested all his savings sells for less than what it cost, and thus, by one stroke of the pen, the Government of India reduces what is really the national wealth of the poor in India, in order to meet its own liabilities on somewhat easier terms. No proposal likely to affect in a similar manner the savings of the poor could be entertained for a moment in England; and it is possible to conceive that, if such a proposal was made in a poor continental country like Italy, the masses would rise in rebellion from one end of the Peninsula to the other. The Indian Government is stronger and more absolute than the Government of Italy, and the responsibility, therefore, of saving the interests of the poor, and of taking no action injuriously affecting the savings of the poor, is all the greater.

10,693. How if the savings were hoarded in rupees?
—There is very little of that.

10,694. We will not go into the quantity of it, but what is the proportion?—Of course that would increase

in value, but there is a very little saving in rupees in Bengal. I have been in a great many districts in Bengal, and practically all the wealth of the cultivating classes is in the silver jewellery of the women. I have been in districts that were affected by scarcity and famine. I remember that, after the great storm wave and cyclone in 1876, I was sent to a place where the cultivators had practically lost all their paddy and rice. Previous to the calamity the people in this place had been very well off, and for nine or ten months they supported themselves by buying shiploads of rice, paying for it by the proceeds of the sale of the jewellery of their women. That was in 1877. The cyclone was in 1876, and this distress was in 1877. I happened to be sent to the island which was most seriously affected by this cyclone and storm wave. On the greater part of that island the crops were totally destroyed. If such a thing had happened in other parts of India it might have been followed by a famine, but here the cultivators were very well off, and their women had a quantity of jewellery, and, as a matter of fact, they brought out these silver ornaments in order to raise money to tide over their temporary difficulty. I did not see that they brought out hoarded rupees; in fact, the hoarding of rupees is rather the exception in Bengal.

10,695. In the case of ornaments bought previous to 1893, what would be the difference between the value at the time of purchase and the value now?—They paid one rupee for a tola of silver, which is the rupee weight. They take the silver things to the bazaar, and now

they get 10 annas for the tola. That is, where they find the difference.

10,696. The price is regulated by the market value of silver?—The value to the cultivator when he purchased his ornaments was about 14 to 16 annas per tola. Now, for the first time, a difference is made between the price of silver and the coined silver.

10,697. No ; the difference that is made is this, that you cannot take silver and have it coined?—The result is that there is a great difference between the price of silver and coined silver.

10,698. The bazaar price is what?—About 10 or 11 annas per tola. In the last 20 or 30 or 40 years, when the cultivator went into the bazaar to buy silver, he paid at the rate of 14 or 15 or 16 annas per tola. They have always made their purchases of jewellery for their women at this rate. Now, if they go to sell their silver ornaments, they get a third less. Therefore it is virtually a confiscation of a third of what they have paid for their jewellery, which, as I have explained, represents the savings of the people of India.

10,699. You say that "the proposals of the Government of India are calculated to add to its own liabilities." Will you explain that?—There I was referring to the rupee paper—the Government Securities, as we call them in India.

10,700. You contend that it will increase the charge for interest on those securities?—Yes, it virtually raises the value of the securities, because the rupee is raised.

10,701. You say, "the debt of the Government of

India is partly in rupees, and, by adding to the value of the rupee, you add to the debt?"—Yes. The indebtedness is mainly to moneyed classes in England, and the net result of the proposals, therefore, will be to add to the indebtedness of the people in India to the money-lenders of England. Where the Government borrowed a thousand rupees of small value, the Government now virtually tears up the old bond and executes a new one for a thousand rupees of enhanced value.

10,702. That again will only apply to the borrowing that has taken place in those three years, and the bulk of the rupee debt was contracted before. Therefore the Government gains now?—Yes, my remark applies to what took place in the last three years.

10,703. You say, "the proposals of the Indian Government mean a general increase in the pay and perquisites of all officials who are paid in rupees." Will you explain that: do you draw there any distinction between the incomes that have to be remitted out of India, and the incomes that are spent in India? I will tell you why I want to ask this question. The evidence that has been given here is that inside India a rupee goes now as far as it used to go, practically; that there has been no appreciable difference made in the internal value of the rupee?—It goes further, I should say, from the prices which I have quoted here.

10,704. We have had evidence to the effect that, for all practical purposes, that is so; that is, if I have an income of 1,000 rupees a month and I have to spend that in India, that 1,000 rupees will go just about as far

as it would have done 10 years ago?—Well, there has been a fall in the price of food grains and that means an increase of pay to those who get the same number of rupees as before.

10,705. Suppose I have in India an income of 1,000 rupees per month or 12,000 rupees a year, and if I am obliged to remit 600% a year to England for the maintenance of my family, then at a shilling rate I should not have much left?—I was referring only to what is spent in India. I say the proposals of the Government of India mean a general increase in the pay and perquisites of all officials who are paid in rupees. There, of course, I refer to all officials, including those who are natives of India, and who spend their pay in India. I say the poorer and indebted classes, who deserve relief at the hands of the Government, are crushed by an addition to their taxes, by an addition to their indebtedness, and by a reduction of their savings, while to the fortunate classes who are in the Government service, or who draw their pensions in rupees, the Government makes a real donation in the shape of an unearned increase to their pay and perquisites.

10,706. The gist then of this is that you regard raising the value of the rupee as adding to the national debt of the people of India and to the high price which their foreign administration costs?—Their administration generally, because I am referring to the native employees also.

10,707. Then will you tell us how you think these proposals have an effect on the manufacturers of India?

—On that point I should premise that my information is second-hand, because I am not personally engaged in manufacture or trade ; but I have consulted men engaged in trade, and they tell me that the raising of the value of the rupee artificially dislocates trade, and has injured manufacture. I have heard from merchants engaged in Bombay in the cotton industry, that the cotton industry is in a miserable state just now, especially in competition with the produce from China and Japan, and they impute that, directly or indirectly, to the closing of the mints. It is well known that many of the manufactures of India have been all but ruined—within the memory of living men—by an unequal competition with the steam and machinery of Europe. I have myself, within the period of my service, visited villages of weavers almost deserted, and relapsing into jungle, manufactories of various Indian dyes, which have been closed and abandoned, and industries in metal and in leather, which are declining. It is useless to complain of this, it is useless to expect, in these days of free trade, that any sort of protection would be extended to the dying industries of India by the British Government. But it is not unreasonable to expect that the Government will refrain from taking any direct action calculated to further repress the declining Indian industries. If India had representative institutions, the representative of the cultivators and manufacturers and exporters would have unanimously raised their voice against artificially raising the value of the rupee. In the absence of such representative institutions, the Government of India represents the

interests of the people, and a moral obligation rests on the Government not to sacrifice the interests of the people to the demands of special classes, however strong and however influential. British trade is prospering with other Asiatic countries having silver currencies; why should British traders demand, in the case of India, a fixed ratio between gold and silver, which they cannot demand from other Asiatic countries? The people of India do not ask for it; the people of India will not profit by it; the people of India are likely to lose in a variety of ways, as indicated above, by the artificial raising of the value of the rupee. And the Government of India, naturally representing the people, and standing forward as the protectors of their welfare, should reject a scheme which the people do not want, and cannot profit by. What I ask is that no further impediment should be placed in the way of manufacturers by the closing of the mints, and by the direct or indirect consequences arising from that. It is my opinion, derived from merchants, both in Calcutta and in Bombay, that the closing of the mints has very seriously affected the cotton industry of Bombay, the sugar industry in Bengal and in Northern India, and several other industries in India, and especially industries which are affected by the products of those countries which had silver currencies, like China.

10,708. You think it has affected the competition with China?—Yes.

10,709. Do you regard it as giving a bonus to China as against India?—That is the opinion of the merchants I have consulted.

10,710. You say, "The proposal of the Government of India is not the natural or the proper remedy for that increasing drain which is annually flowing from India to England, in the shape of pay, and pensions, and allowances"? The allowances are paid in England in gold, and, instead of reducing its gold obligations, which is the natural and proper remedy, the Government seeks to adopt the unnatural and desperate and dangerous remedy of converting all its revenues in India into gold. Let us suppose the case of an Indian landlord, who gets his rents from his estate in rupees and has to pay an agent in London in gold. What would courts of justice and equity think if the landlord preferred suits to realise his Indian rents in gold, on the ground that he has to pay one London agent in gold?—His prudent and proper course would be to minimise his London expense, and, similarly, the natural and proper remedy for the difficulties of the Government of India would be to carry on the administration of India, as far as it is consistent with efficiency, through the instrumentality of the children of the soil, whose pay and pensions have not to be defrayed in gold. I say that an endeavour ought to be made, as far as is compatible with efficient administration, to reduce its expenditure ; to have as much work done in India by the natives as possible, and, I think, with the spread of education in India, it is possible now to utilise the people of India to a larger extent than is done now under the existing rules. Under the existing rules, the higher services in all departments are recruited from England, and, therefore, from among Englishmen ; not

only the Indian Civil Service, which includes the Executive and Judicial services, but also the Engineering Department, the Postal Office Department, the Opium Department, the Forest Department, the Medical Department, and the Education Department. In all those departments—I do not know why, but it is a fact—the higher posts are almost invariably filled by Englishmen. The result, of course, is that there is a greater drain from India to this country. When these people retire from the various services, their pensions have to be paid by India, and remitted to this country. My idea is, even from this financial point of view, it is now desirable that, education having spread in India, a greater proportion of the higher posts in the service should be allotted to the people of India.

10,711. At reduced payments?—Reduced gold payments—at reduced payments in the first instance, and also reduced gold payments.

10,712. You think, generally, that there might be a great reduction of expenditure?—Yes.

10,713. Both military and civil?—Yes.

10,714. Then you say, “the proposal of the Indian Government withdraws the natural check which now exists against extravagant expenditure and unlimited borrowing in England.” I do not quite follow that. First of all, you can borrow in England at a very low rate of interest?—Yes.

10,715. Is it an advantage to India to have English money spent in productive works in India?—If the Government have to borrow, it is certainly an advantage

to be able to borrow at low rates ; but, I say, an earnest attempt ought to be made to reduce our public debt, as has been done in England during the last 50 years.

19,716. What is the public debt of India ?—The debt has gone up by 63,598,000*l.* sterling in the last 20 years.

10,717. Would you define what you mean by “the debt” of India ?—I am speaking of the total debt, including railways. I will distinguish that afterwards.

10,718. But that is all important. Of course, where we have made such very large and successful efforts in this country to reduce our debt, the debt is represented, so to speak, by nothing—there is no property against that debt ; it was a debt incurred for public purposes at the time, and there was no reproductive return upon it. Therefore, it is a burden upon the taxpayers of the country, and we have a sinking fund ; and when we reduce the debt, as you very properly say, that is an advantage to the country. But let me put this extreme case : Suppose this country had to take over the whole railway system of Great Britain, and had to pay 1,000,000,000*l.*—which, I suppose, is a very moderate estimate—would you say that the debt of this country was increased by 1,000,000,000*l.* ?—I will take the two things separately, as you desire.

10,719. If you please. I wanted to be quite clear, because my impression is that for the year 1898-99, the year we are now in, the charge for the debt proper of India is a lower figure than it has ever been since the Mutiny. I have the figures here from the parliamentary

return 15 years ago, the charge, in 1884-85, was Rx. 3,907,848. This year the interest on debt is Rx. 2,448,000 ?—I take the figures for the last 20 years, according to Sir Henry Waterfield's evidence before this Committee. He says, "the total increase of debt in this country within this period is 63,598,000*l.*" Against that he shows a total capital outlay on public works of 61,036,000*l.* sterling. If you take that completely away from both sides, the debt within the last 20 years, which have been years of continuous peace inside India, has not been reduced at all, according to Sir Henry Waterfield's evidence. He says, what we have spent on productive works—in which he includes, I suppose, railways, canals, and irrigation works—is more than covered by the debt that we have incurred in this country. We have spent on public works about 61 millions, we have borrowed 63½ millions. So that, if we deduct all that has been spent upon public works, and so forth, and on the other hand all that we have borrowed in England, our net indebtedness, instead of being reduced, as has been done in this country, has increased in India by 2½ millions in these 20 years.

10,720. But the fall of the rupee alone involved the Indian Government in borrowing 6,000,000*l.* sterling ?—But the fall of the rupee has directly increased the revenues of the Indian Government.

10,721. Dividing the debt into the debt in India and the debt in England, the excess of assets in India (such as railways, irrigation works, loans to corporations, &c.) over the debt in India is Rx. 29,489,000. As

against this, there is a balance of liabilities over assets, so far as the debt in England is concerned, of 55,675,000*l.* So that, when the Secretary of State put his Budget before the House of Commons last session, the real debt of India, which represents the Mutiny and all the military operations that have taken place in India, is the difference between the liabilities of 55,675,000*l.* in England, and the assets of Rx. 29,489,000 in India. You can hardly find a parallel to that state of things. All I want is, that you gentlemen, who influence public opinion—quite legitimately—amongst your own people, should not think that your country is as poor as it is sometimes supposed to be?—I should like to learn that from you.

10,722. The interest upon the debt of India is this year only 2½ crores?—Will you allow me to take these two things separately? I will leave out of consideration railways now, and I will say that, taking Sir Henry Waterfield's figures, there has not been any reduction in the public debt of India in the last 20 years. Those 20 years have been years of uninterrupted peace, during which there has been a great deal of reduction of the public debt of England; and, I say, there ought to have been a very considerable reduction in the public debt of India.

10,723. Do you say there has been a period of uninterrupted peace for the last 20 years?—Yes.

10,724. What do you say to the Afghan war?—That only cost 3,000,000*l.* You mean the war last year?

10,725. No, I mean the Afghan war.—That is 20 years ago.

10,726. Since 1880 the English Exchequer has voted 5,000,000*l.* towards the cost of that war?—I know. It was a war outside India.

10,727. At any rate, you cannot call it a period of uninterrupted peace?—Leaving out the expense of the Afghan war, which was a war outside India, we have made no reduction in the public debt of India, and we ought to have made a reduction. An endeavour ought to have been made during those years of peace to bring down our public debt, so that we might borrow again when it was necessary to do so. And I further say that the people of India—say one financial representative from each of the five great Provinces—ought to be consulted by the Government; they should form a committee, and some place should be found for them in the Viceroy's Executive Council, in order to advise Viceroy and the Finance Minister in preparing every year's Budget. A systematic endeavour should be made to reduce the net public debt in every year of peace. That is my first contention. My next point is with reference to railways.

10,728. You say: "Every fresh loan contracted in England by the Indian Government is hailed in this country as a further opening for profitable investment; every fresh order for tools and machinery and rails pleases great English manufacturers; every new line opened in India is a new opportunity for English capitalists and manufacturers." Do you not think all those things a great advantage to India?—The first lines of railway were a great advantage to India, and they would have been cheap if we had had to pay twice the

amount that we have paid for them ; but the new lines which are being added now, from year to year, are not so much for the benefit of the country. I remember the condition of India 20 years ago. At that time all the main lines had been opened. The new lines that have been opened since have not added much to the development of trade ; they have been constructed, rather, with regard to local interest. Take one of these newly opened lines in Bengal, which connects North Behar in Assam. The great mass of the cultivators and traders of Bengal did not ask for that line, and have not, as far as my information goes, benefited by that line.

10,729. Who have found the money for that line ?
—I do not know.

10,730. Do you refer to the Assam-Bengal Railway ?
—Yes. Nobody travels that way—that is, in the natural course of trade ; the trade is all between Calcutta and the northern part of Bengal. The line may be for the interest of some particular class, but we do not know why the line was laid down. We are never consulted in these things.

10,731. But is not that a matter for the people who find the money ? In this country there have been railways made from nowhere to nowhere, but, after all, the loss, if there is a loss, is the loss of the people who put their money into the line ?—Exactly ; but in the case of India, it is the people of India who put their money into the line.

10,732. No ?—We are held liable for the guaranteed profit, which comes to the same thing.

10,733. (*Sir J. Muir.*) Is there a guarantee in the case of the Bengal and Assam line?—I believe so.

(*Sir C. Crosthwaite.*) There is a guarantee, I think, in the case of the Assam-Bengal Railway.

10,734. (*Chairman.*) But the capital was all found in this country?—The capital was found: but, so far as the Government gives a guarantee, we, the people of India, are responsible for finding the guaranteed profits from our taxes.

10,735. The guarantee comes in if the traffic is not sufficient to pay?—Yes. A second instance, I would say, is the line from Assam to Chittagong. That goes over a very wild and hilly country, and I doubt if it will ever pay. It certainly has not developed and will not develop, the trade of that part of the country, because there hardly any produce at all in that part of the country.

10,736. (*Mr. Campbell.*) Has that a guarantee?—I have no information, but I believe it has.

(*Sir C. Crosthwaite.*) It is part of the Assam-Bengal line.

10,737. (*Chairman.*) Let us assume, for the sake of your argument, that the Indian Government have not always sanctioned the best railways, as the English Parliament has not always sanctioned the best railways. We are now dealing with the development of railways throughout India by English capital. Is not that to the advantage of the people of India?—Certainly; but I say that what we are doing lately is different from the main lines that had been constructed before. By 1878 the whole of the trade of India had found proper and

legitimate outlets, and the money which has been['] spent since has not to the same extent developed trade.

10,738. Then how do you explain the increase in traffic, the tonnage and the passenger revenue?—That is mostly along the main routes constructed before.

10,739. The traffic must be taken as a whole. Taken as a whole, the system of Indian railways, including the railways which are not productive, shews a net return on the capital cost of about five per cent.?—But I find by the last Railway Administration Report, which I have no doubt the Committee have seen, that the total loss to the State up to that date was 57 crores of rupees, out of which about one-half, 28½ crores, had been lost in the last 20 years. I do not condemn railways; we wanted railways to develop India, and we must pay for them, even if it is a losing concern; but what I object to is the unlimited extension of railways at an increasing charge to the taxpayer, after all the main lines have been opened out.

10,740. What do you mean by unlimited extension?—I mean what is going on now.

10,741. But there is no unlimited extension. Government sanction has to be obtained?—No doubt there is the engineer's report and the Government inspector's report, and all the rest of it, but what I object to is that the people themselves are not consulted.

10,742. I do not want you to think that these railways in India are sanctioned without considerable caution—indeed, I think a great excess of caution.

I believe that the interests of India would be much better met if the Government gave a freer hand in the construction of public works: and, if English capital goes out there at a low rate of interest, I do not think India has any ground of complaint?—But all this is adding to our indebtedness, and it is a losing concern, according to your own showing—according to the last report published for the year 1897-98. We have lost 57 crores of rupees, and, of that, $28\frac{1}{2}$ crores have been lost within the last 20 years. We should not abandon the railway system altogether, but we should be cautious, and I think the representatives of the people should be consulted before any new lines are sanctioned. There is a railway now under consideration from Mandalay up towards China. Well, it will probably be years and years before that will pay, and at the same time we have either to pay for the construction of it, or to guarantee some profit to the capitalists out of our taxes. These are matters in which, I say, we ought to be consulted. The whole thing is being overdone—to the advantage of the capitalists and manufacturers of this country, and to the loss and disadvantage of the people of India, who are not consulted. That is my contention.

10,743. Now is there any other point that you want to bring forward? You say, “the only check which now exists is that the interest of the capital so borrowed has to be paid in gold.” In some cases it is the fact, is it not, that the interest on the capital is paid in rupees?—Yes, if you wish to borrow;

but the point I wish to make is this: that an attempt ought to be made to reduce our expenditure.

10,744. That is really not before this Committee. We have to consider the question here, whether it is desirable to introduce a gold standard and gold currency into india, and whether it is desirable to have a stable rate of exchange?—What I have said would come directly under that, because the necessity for adopting a gold standard, or for giving a gold value to the rupee, would disappear to a great extent, if the expenditure were so reduced as to make our income meet our expenditure. The loss of which the Indian Government complains would not exist if more economy were practised, and the expenditure of India were reduced.

10,745. Have you considered that, if no step was taken, and the rupee went to its bullion value, and assuming that silver went no lower, you would require at the present rate of expenditure in India something like an increased income of 12 crores?—I have heard that stated. I find, in the first place, that a great portion of that 12 crores could be knocked off by a little economy.

10,746. You think that, by economical arrangement the 12 crores could be saved?—A considerable portion of it; and the remaining portion could be met by the natural increase of revenue which the very fall of the rupee would give rise to, as I have explained.

10,747. Then, taking your opinion as a whole, you would face that emergency and let the rupee go to bullion price?—Yes. I would have no hesitation what-

ever about that, because I am convinced that the revenues estimated in rupees would rise, as they have risen in the past, with the fall of the rupee; and, secondly, that a good deal of saving could be effected if we practised economy in India.

10,748. For all those reasons that you have very clearly put before us, you are opposed to the proposals of the Government of India?—I am strongly opposed to them.

10,749. Do you upon this question represent the views of the Indian National Congress?—No, I do not belong either to the Indian National Congress or to its British Committee.

10,750. But you do represent a mass of native opinion that you feel justified in bringing before us? —Yes.

[Sir John Muir, Bart. remarked: "The evidence which you have just given has struck me as very important. Could we obtain evidence from others of the Natives of India? We have had difficulty in getting at information from the Natives of India. It appears to me most desirable that we should have that evidence."

Mr. Dutt suggested that witnesses should be called from India, and mentioned the names of Messrs. Rojoni Nath Roy, Seraj-ul-Islam, B. L. Gupta, I.C.S., Sita Nath Roy, A. M. Bose, R. D. Mehta and Perojsha Mehta. None of these Indian witnesses however was called or examined.]

IX. CONGRESS AT LUCKNOW.

[*Presidential speech, December 27, 1899.*]

Acceptance of the Chair.

WHEN in October last I received through my friend, Mr. Bonnerjee, your kind invitation to preside at this meeting of the Indian National Congress, I confess, I received it with some degree of surprise and some degree of misgiving. I happened to be then engaged in the pleasant task, to which I have cheerfully devoted most of my spare time during the last fifteen years, of trying to interpret to my countrymen and to modern readers generally some of the literary heritage which has been left to us by our forefathers ; and, I confess, the prospect of a sudden change from the desk to the platform somewhat alarmed me. Nor was the alarm altogether groundless ; for when I read the speeches made from this platform in past years by some of the ablest and most eloquent men that our country has produced during this generation, I felt grave doubts whether you were altogether wise in your choice in asking me to preside in the present year. However, I felt the great honour you did me in imposing the task upon me ; I feel the high honour as I stand to-day among so many who are so well qualified to perform this task ; and for better or for worse, I have accepted your kind proposal and am amidst you to-day. And if you will listen with some indulgence to the plain words

of a plain man, I will try to convey to you in a few words some practical suggestions, on the administrative questions of the day.

I need hardly tell you that these questions have received my attention and my consideration for years past ; I have spoken and written on them during the last two years ; and during the preceding twenty-six years I had constantly to deal with many of them in official correspondence. It is perhaps known to all of you that the Government of India and the Local Governments permit and encourage the utmost freedom to all officials in the expression of their opinions in official correspondence on the administrative questions which constantly come up for discussion. It is in the course of such discussions that the men in the Civil Service come to know and to respect each other's opinions, and are often brought in closer contact with each other. And as we are holding this present meeting of our Congress in the North-West of India, I recall to-day with pride that it was in the course of a discussion of this nature over the Bengal Tenancy Bill which was passed into law in 1885, that I had the pleasure and the privilege of first knowing that sympathetic ruler and that distinguished statesman whom you now claim as Lieutenant-Governor of these provinces, but whom we in Bengal are proud to claim as originally of the Bengal Civil Service.

Gentlemen, I often felt it my duty in the course of these official discussions to suggest reforms on the basis of accepting in a larger degree the co-operation of the people of India in the administration of the country.

And although I have ceased to be an official now, I still consider it my duty to do what lies in my humble power to advise and help the Government of the day in the great task of a good and successful administration based on the co-operation of the people. And it is because this is precisely the object of the Indian National Congress—it is because it is your aim and endeavour to sustain and help British administration based on popular co-operation—that I find myself amongst you to-day, and in complete unison with you in views and aspirations.

The creed of the Congress.

Gentlemen, I have perused a great portion of the Congress literature as published in a handy volume by the enterprising publisher Mr. Natesan ; and to those who desire honestly to know the aims and aspirations of the educated men of India, I can honestly recommend a perusal of this valuable publication. An honest critic will find in this volume—from the first page to the last—a sincere desire to support and sustain the Government by the co-operation of the people, to strengthen the hands of the Government by fair criticism, to help the Government by keeping it informed of the views and aspirations of the people. These are services which would be useful and valuable to administrators in any country in the world, and these are services which are doubly valuable in India where the people are not represented in any of the Executive Councils and Secretariats where executive and legislative measures are first put into shape. For remember, gentlemen, that there are generally two sides

to every question which comes up for discussion, and it is desirable and necessary that both sides should be properly represented and heard before the question is decided. It is no disrespect to the Civil Service of India to say that it represents, ably and fairly, the official side only of Indian questions. I have had the honour of passing the best years of my life in the Indian Civil Service, and I shall be the last person on earth to question either the ability, or the honesty of purpose, of those able and hard-working men who form that magnificent service. I have pleasant recollections of the years which I have passed in complete accord and friendliness with my colleagues in that service, of the fair and handsome treatment which I received from my seniors, and of the loyal and zealous co-operation which I received from my juniors; and I will say this, that take the Indian Civil Service with all its faults and all its shortcomings, —for hard work and honesty of purpose there is not a finer body of administrators in the world. Nevertheless, it must be admitted, and it is no disrespect to the Indian Civil Service to say it, that that service represents only the official view of Indian questions, and does not and cannot represent the people's views. There are two sides to every question, and it is absolutely necessary for the purpose of good government and of just administration that not only the official view, but the people's view on every question should be represented and heard. There are local bodies in different parts of India which give expression to the people's views on local questions; but this National Congress is the only body in India

which seeks to represent the views and aspirations' of the people of India as a whole in all large and important, and if I may use the word, Imperial questions of administration. Therefore, this National Congress is doing a service to the Government the value of which cannot be over-estimated, and which, I feel certain, is appreciated by the Government itself. It is a gain to the administration to know what we feel, and what we think, and what we desire,—though our demands cannot always be conceded. It is a help to responsible administrators to know in what direction our wishes and our aspirations tend, though they may not always agree with us. I honestly believe therefore that you are helping the cause of good administration and of good government in India by your deliberations year after year, and I trust and hope that you will continue to carry on these deliberations in the future, as you have done in the past, with good sense and moderation, with loyalty to your rulers, and with fidelity to the real interest of the people. We cannot fail in this endeavour; the future is with us; and looking at the progress of nations all over the British Empire in every part of the world, I, for one, feel confident that we, too, are destined to move onwards as a portion of that great Empire, and that we, too, shall secure some measure of progress and self-government under the imperial rule of England. This is the creed of the Congress as it is mine, and it is, therefore, gentlemen, that I feel it an honour to find myself amidst you to-day. And consistently with this principle, my speech to-day will be, not one of criticism,

but mainly and essentially one of practical suggestions to which the Government will, I humbly hope, give such consideration as they may seem to deserve.

Famine of 1897.

Gentlemen, it is a little over two years ago you celebrated in India, with every demonstration of loyalty and good feeling, the sixtieth year of the reign of the Queen-Empress. I happened to be in England on that day; and I witnessed with joy and gratification the august procession in London—Her Majesty driving in state through a circuit of six miles, preceded and followed by representatives of every portion of the British Empire, and cheered by half a million of loyal Englishmen who lined the circuit. Every contingent from every land was cheered as it accompanied the Queen, and I can tell you that none was cheered more loudly and more heartily than the Indian contingent—the Indian princes and rajas, distinguished by their graceful dress and noble demeanour, their manly bearing and their soldier-like appearance. It was a great and imposing and gratifying sight, but it was clouded by one dark shadow. The British public felt, British newspapers wrote, and British statesmen spoke, that while every self-governing colony represented in that procession was prosperous and happy, India, alone, with its vast population, was even then suffering from a famine which had spread over a larger extent of country than had ever been visited by famine in any single year. Questions were asked why there should be such famines in India when famines were

unheard of in any other well-governed country in the world, and doubts were expressed if British rule in India had been altogether a blessing for the poor cultivators and labourers of India.

But, gentlemen, the famine of 1897 was not the only calamity of that year; it was accompanied by a war outside our frontiers which cost us some millions and many brave lives, and it was accompanied by a plague the ravages of which are not yet over. In the midst of those calamities the Government thought it necessary to adopt rigorous measures, and the Government thought it wise to restrict that liberty of the Press which we in India had enjoyed for over sixty years. It is not my intention to-day to dwell on the sad occurrences of 1897, the saddest year in its accumulation of calamities since the time that India passed from the hands of the East India Company to the Crown. Nor is it my intention to revive to-day the discussions which were held in this country and in England when the unfortunate Sedition Bills were passed into law.

Sedition Law of 1898.

I recall with sadness the debates which took place in the Viceroy's Council and in the House of Commons when these Bills were passed into law. It was my privilege to hear those debates in the House of Commons, and I think I only echo the general feeling of all educated men in this country when I acknowledge our debt of gratitude to those who so ably but so unsuccessfully fought for us both in the Viceroy's Council and in the

House of Commons. I do not desire to renew these discussions, but now that the fight is over, and the Bills have been passed into law, I often ask myself if there is a single Englishman in this country with an intimate knowledge of the country and its people who honestly thinks that the reactionary measure was needed, or that it is answering any useful purpose, or that it has strengthened the Government and increased its reputation and credit in the eyes of Europe. Gentlemen, the measure was based on a blunder—the blunder of connecting sedition with the spread of education. The truth is precisely the reverse of this. English education has not only not produced sedition in the land, but it has been the strongest weapon by which the Government has stamped out real sedition in this country within the last fifty years. In the dark days of 1857 and earlier, there was real sedition in the land,—a real wish in some dark and obscure corners to overturn this great Empire. That desire was born of ignorance and lurked amidst ignorant classes, and the Government has successfully stamped out that feeling by the spread of education. There never was a greater imperialist among the Governors-General of India than Lord Dalhousie, and Lord Dalhousie strengthened and fortified the Empire by giving effect to the famous educational despatch of 1854, and spreading education through vernacular schools. There never was a stronger upholder of British dominion in its darkest days than Lord Canning, and Lord Canning established the Universities of Calcutta,

Bombay, and Madras. The same policy has been pursued by successive Viceroys during the last forty years with the same object and the same effect, and wherever education has spread, sedition in India is dead. And if real sedition still lingers in any corner of India, it is in the darkness of ignorance, not in the sunlight of education and free discussion. If I were disposed to foment sedition in India I would desire in the first place to suppress all free discussion, suppress all newspapers, and suppress all public meetings, as a burglar puts out the lights of a room before he commits burglary. And I make bold to add, gentlemen, that if you had been inspired by hostile feelings against British rule in India, you would have worked in the dark, and not come forward from all parts of India, year after year, to openly and loyally place your views before the ruling power. Educated India has practically identified itself with British rule, seeks to perpetuate British rule, is loyal to the British rule, as Lord Dufferin said, not through sentiment, but through the stronger motive of self-interest; because it is by a continuance of the British rule that educated India seeks to secure that larger measure of self-government, that position among the modern nations of the earth, which it is our aim and endeavour to secure. Gentlemen, if you had a single representative in the Viceroy's Executive Council, if you had one Indian member to take a part in those deliberations in the Executive Council which resulted in the Sedition Law, you could have explained these matters then and there. But it is a penalty which all Governments constituted like

the Executive Councils of India have to pay, that they have to decide questions after hearing one side only, and not other. Only one view is properly represented before them, and not the other ; and the ablest, the most just, and the most conscientious of judges will make mistakes, if they base their decisions on evidence produced by one party, and not the other.

Only one word more before I leave this subject. I regret as much and as sincerely as any man in India the bitterness of tone which sometimes pervades journalism in this country. Five years ago, as officiating Commissioner of Burdwan, I had occasion to write on this subject, and if I allude to my report now, it is because the report was printed and published in the *Calcutta Gazette*, and is thererore not an official secret. I said on that occasion, and on many succeeding occasions, that differences in opinion must always exist between the English newspapers and the Indian newspapers in this country. English newspapers hold that an absolute government is the best and only possible government of India, and that any system of representation or self-government is a mistake. The Indian papers hold on the other hand that there can be no good government in a large and civilised country like India, and no satisfactory solution of those great problems like famine and the impoverishment of the humbler classes, without some co-operation of the people themselves in the control of the administration. It is possible, I said, to hold and maintain these opposite views without studied contempt and sneer on the one side, and bitterness of tone on the other side. And those

journals which introduce this element of contempt and hatred in the discussion of administrative questions are creating difficulties for the British Government, and sowing seeds of evil in India. It is by some degree of sympathy, some degree of good feeling and neighbourly courtesy and not by Sedition Laws that the relations between the different sections of the Indian community can be improved. As one who has passed the best years of his life in administrative work, I have noticed that every improvement in the tone of the English press is warmly responded to by the Indian press, and that every want of kindliness and good feeling adds to the difficulties of administration and weakens British rule in India.

Calcutta Municipality.

But I pass over this subject, because it is not my object to-day to make my speech a criticism of the Sedition Law, or of other measures already passed. I wish also to pass over with very few remarks the controversies relating to recent municipal laws, and to the Calcutta Municipality. These controversies are fresh in your minds, and the subject will, no doubt, receive ample justice from other speakers before we have closed our proceedings. To me one most consoling feature in the history of this unfortunate measure is the help rendered to our cause by so high an authority as the Right Honourable Sir Henry Fowler. It was my privilege to be a listener in the House of Commons on the memorable night when the late Secretary of State spoke from the Liberal front bench, supporting Mr. Herbert Roberts,

and condemning the virtual withdrawal of that boon of self-government which it is the proud boast of England to have conferred on the metropolis of India. Gentlemen, even Sir Henry Fowler has spoken in vain—at least, for the present—but we are none the less grateful to him for his strong advocacy of a just and righteous cause, the cause of self-government in India. Nor are we less grateful to those who have fought the same battle in this country, foremost among whom stands Raja Binay Krishna Deb, a worthy scion of a worthy house which has been loyal and friendly to British rule in India since the days of Clive and Hastings. To our friends who fought in the Legislative Council, and to others who were true to the cause of our progress is due our warmest acknowledgment and our deepest gratitude. Gentlemen, their example, their endeavours and their sustained effort will live in the memory of our countrymen, and will find a place in the history of our country. A constitutional battle so fought is not fought in vain, and our children and our children's children, to whom we shall hand down the heritage of a loyal and constitutional agitation for self-government under the imperial and progressive rule of England, will look upon the closing of the nineteenth century as an epoch in the history of the land, and will draw new inspiration from the example of the men of this century who have lived and worked and fought—not in vain. There are defeats which are more glorious than victories; and the defeat which we have sustained will strengthen our hearts, freshen our hopes, and nerve our hands for new endeavours.

With regard to the actual result of this battle, I do not know if there is any class of men in Calcutta who in their hearts like it much. I have asked myself if there is any Englishman familiar with the history of the Calcutta Municipality who thinks that the new measure will improve administration, promote sanitation, or secure the willing co-operation of all classes of citizens. I do not know if the officials of Calcutta who have done so much in the past to foster municipal self-government will contemplate with gratification the ruin of the noble edifice which they built up after the labours of a quarter of a century. I do not know if the European merchants of Calcutta, who are busy, practical men, and have lived in amity and good feeling with the Indian population, will like the idea to spread over the country that wherever English trade prospers not only Indian manufactures, but Indian political and municipal rights, too, must be sacrificed. I do not know if the new City Fathers of Calcutta contemplate with joy their prospects of success, or the odium of a failure, with difficult sanitary problems before them, and a poor, inadequate, almost beggarly income. What the elected Commissioners have done in the way of sanitary reforms with this poor income is a matter of history. Gentlemen, I remember Calcutta some forty years under the administration of Government officials, when we as school boys had to walk to school by open drains and reeking filth. I remember Calcutta as it was under the Justices of the Peace, some thirty years ago, with its awkward tale of waste and jobbery. And I have seen year after year the improvements effected, the

sanitary reforms done, the wasteful expenditure cut down, and every department of the office brought to order, by the elected Commissioners within the last twenty-five years, by some of the best men whom our country has produced, and who have given years of their life to this patriotic work. Their work has been consistently recognised in past years by successive rulers of the land, but it is necessary to give a dog a bad name in order to hang it; and it was reserved for Sir Alexander Mackenzie who was a friend of self-government under the administration of Mr. Gladstone and Lord Ripon, to end his career in India by giving the self-government system in Calcutta a bad name and then effectually strangling it. Gentlemen, I feel sad whenever I think over these matters, and I feel sad when I recollect that this thing has come to pass in the first year of Lord Curzon's administration. I honestly believe that no Viceroy ever came out to India with a more sincere desire to work for the good of the people, and with the help and co-operation of the people. I honestly think that his Lordship in Council gave a most careful consideration to the question before he issued his own proposals; and if that Council had contained a single Indian member to represent the Indian view of the question, and to explain the true history of the municipality during the last forty years, I am persuaded Lord Curzon would have taken the same view as Sir Henry Fowler has taken, and would have effected the needed reforms in the Calcutta Municipality and strengthened the executive, without virtually sacrificing self-government. But our difficulty and our

danger lie in this, that great administrative questions are discussed and settled in Executive Councils where we are not represented and not heard. I do not say that the official view is necessarily wrong, and that our view is necessarily right; but I do say that both views should be fairly represented before the tribunal which shapes our destinies. I do not say that we have more knowledge or more experience or more ability than the high officials who represent the official view of the question, but I do say that we view questions from a different point of view, and that there should be a constitutional channel for the representation of our views in the Executive Councils of the empire. For when the Executive Councils have decided a question, the thing is done—the Legislative Councils simply carry out the official mandate with unimportant alterations, as the Bengal Council has done in the case of the Municipal Bill.

Famine of 1899.

But, gentlemen, I must extricate myself from this subject and pass on at once to the great calamity which now stares us in the face, the famine, from which millions of our countrymen are suffering even now; and with your permission I will devote all my remaining time to this one great subject—which appears to me to be one of paramount importance—the famines of India, and the condition of our poorer classes. Gentlemen, you are aware of the prompt measures which have been already adopted by the Government of Lord Curzon for

the relief of distress in British territory and for helping Indian Princes to relieve distress in Native States during this time of trouble and anxiety. And those of you who have had experience of relief operations in previous famines will feel confident that Englishmen when they have once put their hand to the plough, will not leave the work half done. It is with a pardonable pride that I recall past days when I myself was employed along with my English colleagues in famine relief operations, or in providing against impending famines, in 1874, in 1876, and in 1896; and judging from my past experience, and judging from the measures adopted this year, I feel confident that no effort, no expenditure, no means humanly possible, will be spared by a benevolent Government to save life and to relieve distress among the millions of our suffering countrymen. And in the face of that calamity it behoves us all, it behoves this National Congress, to do all we can to strengthen the hands of the Government, to offer our help according to our capacity and power, and to place our suggestions before the Government, not in a spirit of criticism, but in a spirit of loyalty and co-operation, for the relief of the present distress and for the prevention of such distress in future.

Alleged causes of Famines.

It is in this spirit that I suggest that the time has come when it is desirable to take some effective measures to improve the condition of the agricultural population of India. Their poverty, their distress, their indebted-

ness, all this is not their fault. Sometimes it is asserted that the poverty of the people and the famines which we witness in India, and in no other well-governed country on earth, are due to the over-increase in population. Gentlemen, this is not so. If you go into figures you will find that the population does not increase in India as fast as it does in many European countries like Germany and England. And if you read the paper written by Mr. Baines, the late Census Commissioner of India, in the first volume of the British Empire Series recently issued in London, you will find the Census Commissioner himself admits that the growth of population in India is not so fast as that in Germany or in England. Sometimes again it is asserted that the poverty of the Indian agriculturist is due to his own improvidence, wastefulness, and folly. Gentlemen, this is not so. Those who have passed the best portion of their life among the Indian cultivators, as I have done, will tell you that the Indian cultivator is about the most frugal, the most provident, the most thoughtful about his future among all races of cultivators on earth. If he goes to the money-lender it is not because he is in love with the money-lender, but because he has nothing to eat. If he pays 25 or 37 per cent. as interest on loans, it is because he cannot get loans on lower interest on such security as he can offer.

We are all aware that the Government of India are at the present time endeavouring to safeguard the interests of the cultivators in the Punjab and elsewhere from the claims of money-lenders on their land. I do not wish to

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speak on the merits of the Bill, because I never wish to say a word or to express an opinion on inadequate information, and the information I have been able to gather about the condition of the Punjab tenants is not yet as full and complete as I could wish it to be. All that I can say is that this idea, that the condition of cultivators can be improved, not by helping them to save, but by restricting their right of sale and mortgage, is an old idea which has been found utterly unsound in Bengal. The policy was advocated when the Bengal Tenancy Bill was under discussion fifteen years ago ; I myself took my humble part in strongly resisting the policy ; and if I remember correctly, the able Revenue Secretary of Bengal, who is now the Lieutenant-Governor of these Provinces took the same view. I allude to these views because they are no secret, and will be found published in the *Calcutta Gazette* of that year. The absurdity of relieving the cultivators by virtually taking away from the market value of the one property they have on earth was strongly exposed, and the idea of placing any restrictions on mortgage and sale of lands was ultimately abandoned.

Curiously enough, the question was mooted again in Bengal only three years ago, showing what vast importance is attached to official views and ideas formed in close council chambers. The fear was entertained that land was slipping away from the hands of the cultivating classes to the hands of the money-lending classes, and that to restrict the right of sale and mortgage was the only remedy. I happened to be then acting as Commissioner of Orissa, a part of Bengal, which is not permanently settled, and where

the condition of the cultivators is worse than in other parts of Bengal. If the free right of sale or mortgage has worked evil in any part of Bengal, it must have done so in Orissa. But I was able to show from the records of half-a-century that, although the right of sale and of mortgage had been freely exercised, land had not slipped out of the hands of the cultivating classes, and that to take away from the market value of the land was not the best way to help the cultivators. Fortunately, the greatest revenue authority of Bengal, Mr. Stevens, who afterwards acted as Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, took the same view, and the idea of helping the cultivators by decreasing the market value of their land was once more abandoned. I do not wish, gentlemen, to generalise on these facts; I do not wish to infer that what would be needless and mischievous in Bengal and Orissa may not be needful and useful for the time being in some parts of India where matters may have reached a more acute stage. But what I do wish to emphasize is that such remedies cannot permanently improve the condition of the cultivators; that in order to improve their condition, we must make it possible for them—as it is possible in Bengal—to save in good years against failure of harvest in bad years.

Real Cause of Famines and the Remedy.

Gentlemen, the real cause of the poverty of our agricultural population is simple and even obvious, if we have the courage and the honesty to seek for it and to grasp it. It is not over-population, for the population

does not increase faster than in European countries, does not increase faster than the area of cultivation. It is not the natural improvidence of the cultivator, for those who know the Indian cultivator will tell you that with all his ignorance and superstition, he is as provident, as frugal, as shrewd in matters of his own interest, as the cultivator in any parts of the globe. The real cause of his wretchedness and indebtedness is that except in Bengal and a few other tracts, the land assessment is so heavy that the cultivator is not able to save in good years enough to meet the failure of harvests in bad years. All our village industries, like spinning and weaving, have been killed by a free competition with the steam and machinery of England. Our cultivators and even our village industrial classes therefore virtually depend on the soil as the one remaining source of their substance. The land assessments should therefore be made in a liberal and even a generous spirit. There is every desire in the high officials to make the assessments in a liberal spirit, but as the people have no voice in controlling these assessments, they are found in the actual working to be often illiberal and harsh. They do not leave the cultivators enough to be able to save ; and cultivators therefore fall victims to famine whenever the harvests fail.

Bengal.

The old Hindu law, based on the actual experience of thousands of years, sanctioned one-sixth of the gross produce of the land as the maximum rent. The experience of modern times confirms the wisdom of this

ancient rule. In Bengal, where the Permanent Settlement and the land laws of 1859, 1868 and 1885 save the cultivators from the undue enhancements, the average rent paid by cultivators to landlords does not exceed one-sixth the gross produce in any district, and falls far short of it in eastern districts. The result is that Permanently Settled Bengal, which suffered from the most terrible famine in the last century, has been generally free from destructive famines in recent times. The famines of Behar in 1874 and 1897 were comparatively mild, and there was no loss of life. Extend the Bengal rule to other parts of India, make one-sixth of the gross produce the maximum rent leviable from cultivators in other provinces, and the problem of preventing famines in India is solved.

North-Western Provinces.

In the North-western Provinces and Oudh the cultivators are generally speaking, not safeguarded by a Permanent Settlement. Each new assessment means an increase in Government revenue. Let us find out in what position the actual cultivator is left by such settlements. The system of settlements in the North-western Provinces has often been described, but I have never seen a more lucid account of it, within a brief compass, than in the evidence of Sir Antony Macdonell before the Currency Committee which lately sat in London. Read His Honor's answer to questions Nos. 5737 to 5740, and you have a clear account of the North-west settlements in a nut-shell. There are two salient facts which

I will place before you from this account. In the first place the Government allows the landlords to make their own arrangements with the cultivators, and then demands one-half of what the landlord actually gets, after making certain reductions. In the second place, under these arrangements the landlords are actually getting about 20 per cent. of the gross produce in money, and the Government share is one-half of that, or ten per cent. of the produce. Gentlemen, these arrangements are better than those in many other parts of India, and you may be sure the rules are worked considerately, and even leniently, by a ruler who yields to none in India in his real sympathy for the actual cultivator. But nevertheless I should have been relieved to learn that the 20 per cent. of the gross produce represented the maximum limit of rent, and not the average rent. Without such a maximum limit the cultivator has no assurance against over-assessment and undue enhancement. And a landlord who has submitted to an increase of the Government demand at a settlement has the temptation to reimburse himself by raising his rents—as a squeezed sponge fills itself when thrown into the water—to be squeezed again at the next settlement, thirty years later. Adopt the ancient Hindu rule, which is virtually still the rule in Bengal; make one sixth the actual produce—or even one-fifth the actual produce—the maximum-limit of rent under all circumstances, and you make the cultivators of these provinces as prosperous as they are in Bengal, and the problem of disastrous and fatal famines is virtually solved.

Madras.

The state of things is far worse in Madras. Some portions of the Madras Presidency are permanently settled, but in the greater portion of the Province the revenue is not permanently settled; there is no class of landlords, and the Government demands as revenue one-half of the net produce of the land, *i.e.*, of the produce after deducting the cost of cultivation. For a clear, and luminous, and brief account of how this system has worked I would refer you to the speeches made in recent years by the Raja of Bobbili, the Hon'ble Subba Rao and by Mr. Venkataratnam, himself a large landholder, and President of the Godavari District Association. They point out that the rights of the Madras cultivators have not been strengthened, as in Bengal, by successive Acts within this half-century, but have been weakened by successive measures of the Government. They point out that in 1857, the proprietary right of the cultivator with fixity of assessment was admitted by the Government; that in 1882 under Lord Ripon's administration a virtual pledge was given that no enhancements would be allowed except on the equitable ground of a rise in prices; and that at the present day these pledges are ignored, these safeguards are withdrawn and enhancements are actually made on the ground of reclassification of soils as well as of rise in prices. More than this, I read a passage in the Madras Standing Information of 1879, that the land-tax estimated at one half of the net produce should not exceed 40 per cent. of gross produce where the land is irrigated at Government cost, and

should not exceed 33 per cent. of the gross produce in the case of lands not so irrigated. When I read a rule like this, I am filled with bewilderment and pain. Let me mention, gentlemen, that when the Tenancy Bill of Bengal was under discussion in 1884, I had the honour to recommend that 20 per cent. of the gross produce—which is a little over the old Hindu rate—should be fixed as the maximum of rent payable by a cultivator. My proposal was accepted by the then Revenue Secretary of Bengal who is now the honoured ruler of these North-west Provinces and Oudh. The proposal accordingly found a place in the Tenancy Bill drafted by the Government of Bengal, but it was not ultimately passed into law, because in many parts of Bengal, the zemindars were getting much less than 20 per cent. of the produce ; and to frame a rule about maximum rent might induce landlords in all parts of Bengal to screw up the rental to that maximum. The argument was good, and I was not sorry that my proposal was rejected. But it is somewhat curious that while the Government declined to fix for *private Zemindars in Bengal* a maximum rent of 20 per cent. of the produce, there is actually a rule in their Standing Information Book fixing 33 and 40 per cent. of the gross produce as the maximum land-tax or revenue *realizable by the Government!* Are you surprised that under the circumstances there should be such repeated and disastrous famines in Madras, and that as pointed out by Mr. A. Rogers—late of the Indian Civil Service and a high authority in revenue matters—a great deal of land is

out of cultivation because cultivators cannot pay the tax that is demanded by the State? The rule in Madras is as I have said before, to demand one-half the net produce—*i.e.*, the value of the produce after deducting the cost of cultivation. Gentlemen, if this means one-half the economic rent, as Sir Charles Wood desired it to be in his despatch of 1864, then the tax should not exceed one-sixth the produce of any field, and should, for the whole Province, be about one-tenth the average produce as it is in Northern India.

Bombay and the Punjab.

Gentlemen, I have not time to-day to go over the land-revenue arrangements in other parts of India—of the Bombay Presidency or of the Punjab. In Bombay we have generally the same system as in Madras, the Government generally receiving the tax direct from the cultivators. But the settlement officers in Bombay take into consideration what has been paid by cultivators in previous years without difficulty, and do not endeavour to estimate the field produce at all;—under such a system, where is the security to the cultivator, where is the motive to save? In the Punjab the land-system is somewhat similar to that of the North-Western Provinces; but you will find on examination that neither in Bombay nor in the Punjab is the cultivator assured an adequate proportion of the produce of the land he cultivates; and without such assurance his condition cannot be improved and he cannot be saved from famines merely by tinkering with his relations with his money-

lender. I am not discussing to-day the merits of the different systems prevailing in the different Provinces of India—the *Zemindari* system of Bengal, the *Talukdari* system of Oudh, the *Mahaliwari* system of the North-west, the *Malguzari* system of Central India, or the *Ryotwari* system of Southern India. Nor am I discussing the desirability of extending the Permanent Settlement to all parts of India as was recommended by Lord Canning in 1860, though I myself think, that would be a wise and a generous measure to which the Government is pledged by its many promises in the past. I am not entering into these subjects in order to avoid all discussion, all controversy; and I am laying down a proposal which must receive universal assent without any controversy—*viz.*, that the cultivator should be assured an adequate share of the produce of his land if he is to be saved from indebtedness and poverty, distress and famine. I have confined myself to the actual condition of the cultivator and incidence of the land-tax on the cultivator, for in India the cultivator is the nation. Never mind under what system or under what settlement he lives, assure to him an adequate proportion out of the produce of his land, and he is saved, and the nation is saved.

Central Provinces.

But before I leave this subject I must say one word about the Central Provinces of India, which have suffered so disastrously in the famine of 1897, and which is suffering once more under the famine of 1899.* The

Central Provinces have suffered more from recent famines than any other part of India because the land-revenue settlements have been more severe and more harsh, not in their intention, but in their actual operation, than any other part of India. I constantly heard in England, as I have no doubt you constantly heard in this country, of the disastrous results of the recent revenue settlements in that Province, initiated by Sir Alexander Mackenzie. But I will not mention here what I have heard, I will limit my remarks entirely to the facts contained in official reports, and stated in the House of Commons by the Secretary of State for India in reply to questions put to him in March last year, by one of the truest friends of the Indian cultivator, Mr. Samuel Smith.

Gentlemen, there is a healthy rule, generally followed in the North-Western Provinces, that settlements are made for thirty years, because it is undesirable to harass the people with frequent enhancements and frequent settlement operations. Sir Alexander Mackenzie departed from this rule, and ordered the present settlement for twenty years, save in a few backward tracts, where I suppose still shorter settlements have been made. There is another healthy rule, followed in the North-Western Provinces, that the land-revenue is fixed at one-half the rental received by landlords. Sir Alexander Mackenzie cancelled this rule, and the Government revenue is now fixed at 50 to 60 per cent. in the recent settlement. Add to this certain local rates, and the Government demand on the Malguzars comes to nearly

70 per cent. of their supposed collections. I ask every impartial man, every fair-minded administrator, why settlements have been made in the Central Provinces for twenty years or less when settlements are made in the North-West for thirty years? I ask every responsible ruler why the Government should demand 60 per cent. from the Malguzar of the Central Provinces when the Government, receives only about 40 per cent. in North-West according to the evidence of Sir Antony MacDonnell? These differences in figures may not mean much to the theoretical statesman, but they mean life and death to the Indian cultivator. Every tampering with the settled rules in land settlements, every lowering of the period of settlements, every increase in the proportion of the Government demand means the further impoverishment of the cultivators, means increased wretchedness and indebtedness in ordinary times, increased deaths in famines. Why gentlemen, this very experiment was tried in these North-Western Provinces; the Government demand at first was not half but two-thirds of the assests of the landlords; and that rule created a degree of suffering to the people greater than all the wars of the first half of this century. That rule was ultimately abandoned in 1855, and the Government demand was fixed at one half the rental of the landlord; and is it fair that we should go back in the Central Provinces to the old rule which our experience has taught us here to be harsh and cruel to the cultivators? If the people had any control over the executive action in the Central Provinces, the tampering with the

old established settlement rules would not have been allowed. If the people had been represented in the Viceroy's Executive Council to press these matters, no Viceroy of India would have permitted such departure from the usual settlement rules, a departure which has been disastrous in its consequences on the condition of the people and increased the deaths from famines in the Central Provinces.

Gentlemen, I have detained you longer on this subject than I had intended, but the importance of the subject is my excuse. I state my deliberate opinion, based on a careful study of the question for thirty years, that the land-revenue arrangements in India are responsible, not for bringing on famines, but for deepening the effects of these famines ; and secondly, that if the position of the cultivator was assured, if the demand from him were fixed within equitable and fixed limits, loss of lives could be prevented on the occurrence of famines, as it has been prevented in Bengal. British administration has done much for us ; it has given us internal peace, it has given us education, it has brought us nearer to western civilisation. But British administration has not performed all its duty so long as the country is desolated by famines, unheard of in any other civilised and well-governed country. My conviction is, and I lay it loyally before the Government, that these frequent and acute famines are mainly owing to the cause that *our village industries are gone, and our village lands are over-assessed.* My conviction is, and I lay it loyally before the Government, that this enormous loss of lives is preventible, and

could be avoided through more considerate land settlements, assuring to the cultivator in every province an adequate proportion of the food that he produces.

**Military Expenditure, National Debt, Currency,
Industries, Services.**

Gentlemen, there are various other causes of the poverty of India under British Rule which I have not touched upon to-day, and which I do not wish to touch upon, because they have been discussed ably, eloquently, and repeatedly by yourselves at previous meetings of this Congress, and some of them will be discussed again this year by other speakers. There is the question of the enormous Military Expenditure, and the maintenance of a vast army out of the resources of India, not for the requirements of India, but for the requirements of the British Empire in Asia, Africa, and even in Europe. There is the question of the National Debt, which, in Great Britain, has been reduced by about 175 millions since 1860, and which has gone up by over 100 millions in India within this period, causing an increasing drain out of the revenues of India for the payment of interest in England. There is the question of the Currency which has been lately settled by the Currency Committee in a manner not conducive to the interests of the millions of cultivators whose debts have been increased, and savings depreciated. There is the question of encouraging and helping the Industrial Classes ruined by unfair competition, a question which has been ably and exhaustively dealt with by one of the most learned and thoughtful

writers of our generation, the Hon'ble Mr. Justice Ranade of Bombay. And there is the question of the possible saving in expenditure by the larger employment of the educated people of India, not only in the Indian Civil Service, but in the higher grades of all services, Educational and Medical, Police and Engineering, Post Office and Telegraph. Three generations of Indians have been educated in English schools and colleges in India ; they have proved their fitness and capacity in every place they have held ; and yet they are virtually Uitlanders in their own country so far as a real control over administration is concerned.

I pass over these and other cognate subjects because I have no time to deal with them, and because you have often dealt with them eloquently and exhaustively, and will deal with many of them again. I will only repeat that it is perfectly possible to cut down expenditure, to moderate land assessments, to revive industries, and to prevent deaths from famines, if there is a real and honest determination to rule India for the good of the people and with the co-operation of the people. Gentlemen, I wish with your permission to add one or two words on this last subject, *viz.*, the desirability of enlisting the co-operation of the people in the work of administration,—the desirability of bringing the administration in closer touch with the people, and bringing our rulers in closer touch with ourselves. This is desired by every enlightened and far-sighted ruler as well as by ourselves ; and this is calculated to improve the administration and to make British rule in India stronger and more popular. A

commencement has been made in this direction since the days of Munro and Elphinstone and Lord William Bentinck ; and what I will suggest is not a new departure, but a progress on the lines already laid down. I do not myself believe in new departures and novel experiments in administration ; having passed the best years of my life in administration I naturally have more faith in gradual and cautious progress on the lines which have already been laid down.

Village Unions.

Gentlemen, I will begin with villages—because, as I have already said, in India villager represents the nation. In village administrations there is no touch between the rulers and the people, the only link between the administrators and the people in civil administration is hated link of the police. It is a misfortune and an administrative mistake that our District officers should have so little direct touch with the villagers and their natural leaders, and should work so entirely through the police. If there is distress in the land, the police makes enquiries ; if there is cholera epidemic in the land the police distributes cholera pills ; if a village tank has given way or the the village water-supply dried up the police reports and organises help ; if a tree has been blown down and obstructs a village path, (I have seen instances of this myself), the villagers are powerless to help themselves until the police comes and removes the obstruction. It seems to be a mockery that the very country which was the first to organise village communities, village Panchayets, and

village self-government, and cherished these institutions for 3,000 years, should be rendered so absolutely helpless, and should be ruled through the undesirable agency of the police. Gentlemen, the mistake has been discovered and Village Unions have been formed or are in the course of formation in most Provinces in India. Make these Village Unions real centres of village administration in so far as is consistent with good Government. Parcel out each Sub-division into twenty or thirty Village Unions, entrust the Union Committees with the charge of village roads, village tanks, village drainage, village education, and village hospitals, and send over to them all petty civil and criminal cases, not for judicial disposal, but for amicable settlement. A great deal expensive litigation and bad feeling in villages can thus be stopped, a great deal of useful work can thus be done, and what is more, the natural leaders of the village population will thus come in touch with the Sub-divisional and District administrators, and will form the agents of village administration in so far as they are fit to take that position. An un-sympathetic system of rule through the police will thus be replaced by a rule with the co-operation of the people themselves.

Municipal Towns.

From the subject of Villages I come to the subject of Municipal Towns which are receiving a great deal of attention now. Gentlemen, I consider it of primary importance that we should insist on efficient municipal administration, and that power should be given to the

Government to ensure such efficient administration if the Municipal Commissioners are slack. Such power is retained by the Government in England, and it is more necessary that such power should be retained by the Government in India. But having provided for this, I am of opinion that the work should be done through the elected Commissioners and not through the officials or secretaries appointed by the Government. The latter system ruins self-government, and is not needed. I have myself supervised the work of every Municipality in a District as a District-Officer, and I have supervised the work of all the Municipalities in a Division as a Divisional Commissioner. The Municipal Commissioners were sometimes zealous and sometimes slack, sometimes they went the right way and sometimes the wrong way ; but I have never found them obstructive ; I have never found them averse to sanitary improvement or general progress ; I have never found them other than amenable to reason and advice. With some tact and patience and sympathy we can get all that we want to do through the men elected by people themselves ; and it is unwise and undesirable, it is a confession of our own incompetency and want of sympathy, to try to replace the elective system by men appointed by the Government to do Municipal work in the small District towns of India. The aptitude of Self-Government in towns and villages is, in India, a heritage of three thousand years, and to seek to ignore it is an administrative blunder, and a confession of our own incompetency.

District Boards.

Coming next to the subject of District Boards, the question is often asked why non-official chairmen should not be appointed over these Boards. The reason, gentlemen, in the generality of cases, is that non-official gentlemen who know their own villages and estates well, have not the same knowledge of the District as a whole as the District Officer. We must, above all, insist on efficient work being done—and generally the District Officer is the only man who can in the ordinary course of his tours supervise and secure efficient work throughout his District. At the same time I would not make any hard and fast rule; and where we have retired Government servants or private gentlemen who know their Districts well, and who have the capacity and the time for administrative work, it would be a gain and not a loss to our administration to see such gentlemen appointed chairmen of District Boards; and I sincerely hope to see a beginning made by the Government in this direction. Another question which is often discussed in connexion with District Boards is the poverty of their income. This, gentlemen, is a real and a grave evil; and it has become not only desirable but necessary that for large provincial schemes of irrigation and drainage the resources of the District Board should be supplemented by provincial grants. You are aware how much good is done in these provinces by a system of irrigation-wells; and there is no reason why the work of the maintenance of a sufficient number of such wells and of other works for the preven-

tion of famine should not be made over to the District Board on allotments made by the Provincial Government. In Bengal the crying evil is bad drainage, which causes that malaria which is the curse of one half of the province. There is no reason why a provincial grant should not be made to every District Board for the proper drainage of the District. Gentlemen, I have said it elsewhere that the money spent on one needless trans-frontier war, if spent in improving the drainage of Bengal, would save millions of the people permanently from one of the direst curses of the present age. My advice is, make the District Boards real agents of beneficent administration with the co-operation of the people ; don't strangle them by the shackles of officialism ; don't starve them by want of funds.

Provincial Legislative Councils.

And now, gentlemen, I come to the important subject of Provincial Legislative Councils, and on this subject also my suggestion will be to proceed on the lines already laid down and not to take a new departure. The object of allowing District and Municipal bodies to elect members of these Councils was to allow the views of the people to be represented, and I think every responsible administrator in India will admit that this wise step has improved and strengthened the legislative machinery of the Government. Even when the views of the elected members are rejected—and they are often rejected—even then the expression of their views is a gain to the cause of administration. The time has now come when a fuller

scope may be given to this expression of our views and the representation of our opinions. Half-a-dozen members, elected under somewhat complicated rules can scarcely give expression to the views of a province with a population of thirty or forty millions or more. Is it too much to hope that in the not remote future the Government will find it possible to permit every District to be represented by its own member? I do not object to the number of official and nominated members being also increased; I do not object to the Councils sitting five days or six days in the week instead of one day; and I do not object to the head of the Government reserving the power of vetoing a measure, even against the views of the majority of the Council, in urgent cases as the Queen of England has theoretically the power to refuse her consent to a measure passed by both Houses. With these safeguards, I would suggest an expansion of the Provincial Councils on the bases of each District being represented by its member, so that there may be an adequate expression of the people's opinions and views on every question. We do not wish for the absolute control of the administration of the country, but we do demand an adequate means of placing our views before the Government before it decides on questions affecting our welfare.

Provincial Executive Councils.

But, gentlemen, the Legislative Councils deal with legislation only, there are large and important measures of administration which do not come within the scope of these Councils. The weakness of the present system

of Government is that in the decision on these administrative measures the people have no voice and are not heard at all. To take one instance out of hundreds which will no doubt suggest themselves to you, the people of the Central Provinces of India had no constitutional means of declaring whether the revenue settlement should be for twenty or thirty years; whether the Government demand should be 50 per cent. of the Malguzars' assests, or 60 per cent.; and the decision to which the Government arrived without the constitutional advice of the people has been disastrous. Gentlemen, this defect can be rectified, this weakness may be removed. There are Executive Councils in Bombay and in Madras; similar Executive Councils may be formed in the North-West Provinces and the Punjab, in the Central Provinces and in Bengal, and at least one member of the Executive Council should be an Indian gentleman with experience in administrative work, and representing the views of his countrymen. It is usual for a member of an Executive Council to have a portfolio, *i.e.*, to have one department of work assigned to him; and the work which I would assign to the Indian member is Land Revenue, Agriculture and the Industries. There is no department of work in which an Indian member can make himself more valuable to the voiceless millions of cultivators and artisans. The addition of one Indian member will not weaken Provincial administration. It will strengthen such administration, make it more sympathetic and bring it into somewhat closer touch with the people.

The Viceroy's Executive Council.

And, gentlemen, am I aspiring too high when I hope for similar seats for Indian members in the cloudy heights of Simla? Am I urging anything unreasonable when I propose that the Viceroy who has the benefit of consulting experienced English administrators in his Executive Council, should also have the advantage of hearing the views and opinions of a few Indian members in the same Council before he decides on questions affecting the interests of the people of India? Am I urging anything unwise when I propose that the Viceroy, when he considers measures affecting the condition of the indebted cultivators, the operations of the plague and famine relief, the rules of land-revenue settlements, the questions affecting Hindu and Mahomedan customs and manners, should have by him, in his own Executive Council, a few Indian gentlemen who represent the views, the opinions and the feelings of the people? An Executive Council cannot be much enlarged without loss of efficiency but surely the Viceroy's Council could make room for three Indian gentlemen, one to represent Bengal and Assam, another to represent the North-west and the Punjab, and the third to represent Bombay, Madras and the Central Provinces. The selection should rest, of course, with the Viceroy himself, for anything like election into an Executive Council would be absurd; and the three Indian members should be entrusted with the departments of Agriculture, Industries and Land-Revenue of their respective provinces. The wise

and magnanimous Akbar entrusted his Land Revenue arrangements to a Todar Mall ; and the British Government may consider it wise and statesmanlike to avail itself of the experience of Indian gentlemen in controlling Land Revenue Settlements and generally in improving the condition of the voiceless and impoverished cultivators and manufacturers of India. I myself think that the administration of the country would be vastly improved by such representation of Indian opinions in our highest Councils and that the Government of India and the Government of the Provinces would be brought in closer touch with the people.

Progress in the future.

And now, gentlemen, it only remains for me to thank you once more for the great honour you have done me by electing me to preside on this occasion, and for the kind and patient hearing you have given me. I have been somewhat of an optimist all my life, I have lived in that faith and I should like to die in that faith. The experiment of administration *for the people*, not *by the people* was tried in every country, in Europe in the last century, by some of the best-intentioned sovereigns that ever lived, who are known in history as the Benevolent Despots of the 18th century. The experiment failed because it is an immutable law of nature that you cannot permanently secure the welfare of a people if you tie up the hands of the people themselves. Every country in Europe recognises this truth now, and England foremost of all. Every English colony has obtained a system of

self-government, and from being discontented and disaffected they are now the strongest supporters of the British empire. And a system of complete Self-Government in local affairs was conceded to Ireland by the present Government less than two years ago, when Lord Curzon was a distinguished member of that Government. The conditions of India are different, and I admit freely and fully that we want a strong centralised Government here ; and if the moderate scheme I have proposed tended in any way to weaken the Indian Government, the proposal, gentlemen, would not have come from me. But I have discussed the subject with many eminent Englishmen now in England and possessing vast experience in Indian administration, and I have asked them to reject my scheme if they thought it would weaken the Indian Government instead of greatly strengthening it. Gentlemen, I have never been told in reply that the scheme would weaken the Government. It is isolation, it is exclusiveness, it is want of touch with the people, which weakens British rule in India, and my desire is to strengthen that rule by bringing it in touch with the people, by enlisting the zealous co-operation of a great and loyal nation.

Permit me, gentlemen, to refer for a moment to my own experience as a District Officer. You are aware that a District Officer is liable to frequent transfers ; and I was sometimes in charge of districts where 75 per cent. of the people were Hindus, and at other times of districts where 75 per cent. were Mahomedans. I may remark in passing that everywhere I received the cordial co-operation

of the people in my administrative work, and the sympathy and support which I received from Mahomedan zemindars and the Mahomedan population generally enabled me to administer with some degree of success such vast and difficult districts as Backergunj and Mymensing. But what I wish specially to mention is that in these Mahomedan districts the Government always employed a number of able Mahomedan Deputy Collectors to advise and help the District Officer in his work ; and in all questions relating to the social and economic conditions of the Mahomedan people, and to their public feelings and religious sentiments, I received the most valuable help and advice from my Mahomedan colleagues in the work of administration. Gentlemen, the duties and responsibilities of a District Officer are humble compared to the manifold duties and high responsibilities of a Viceroy or the Governor of a Province ; and I therefore often ask myself if those statesmen do not sometimes feel, as we, humble District Officers, always felt, that it would help and improve administration to have a few true representatives of the people by their side and in their Executive Councils. And I cannot help replying to myself that the advice and help of some Indian colleagues would greatly strengthen the hands of wise and sympathetic statesmen in solving the great problems which lie before them, none of which is more momentous and more pressing than the condition of the Indian agriculturist and the Indian manufacturer.

Gentlemen, from whatever point of view I examined the question, whether in the light of European history,

or of the spirit of British institutions, or of the requirements for good government for India, I feel convinced that to associate the people of India more largely in shaping the administration of the country is not only the wisest but the only possible path before us. It is true we have not been moving onwards in this path in recent years ; we have actually stepped backwards in these years of misfortunes and calamities and panic ; we have even been deprived of those rights and privileges which we secured in years of wise and sympathetic administration. But such years of retrograde movement come to all nations from time to time, even to those who are most advanced. Remember England at the close of the last century, when to talk of political reforms was punished as sedition and crime, when coercive measures were passed to stop public meetings, when reactionary laws were enacted to restrict the liberties of Englishmen. The panic passed away after the Napoleonic wars were over, and the Reform came in 1832. The reactionary period through which we are passing will end before long, and wise English statesmen will perceive in the future, as they have perceived in the past, that England's duty and England's interests are the same in India, to consolidate British rule by extending, not restricting Self-Government, by conciliating, not alienating a vast and civilised nation.

Gentlemen, it is possible to avert distress and disasters and deaths from famines, to spread prosperity and contentment and peace, and to evoke the zealous and loyal and spontaneous support of a grateful nation,

only by conceding to the people, with due and proper safeguards, the rights of Self-Government. It is not possible, without such concession, without admitting the people to a real share in the control of their own affairs, to save India from distress and discontent, from impoverishment and famines. Therefore, as an old and faithful servant of the Indian Government, I have thought it my duty to raise my voice and urge the adoption of the better and the wiser course, the only course which can save our country from preventible misfortunes and disasters, and can consolidate the British Rule in India.

X. FAREWELL SPEECH IN CALCUTTA.

[*Delivered in the Town Hall on February 23, 1900, in
reply to an Address presented by the
citizens of Calcutta.*]

FRIENDS AND COUNTRYMEN,

I am unable to find words to adequately express my feelings on an occasion like this. You overwhelm me by your kindness and by your cordial appreciation of the humble services which I have attempted to render to the cause which we all have at heart. Your kindness and your appreciation will live in my memory through years of future toil and endeavour. I shall remember that you did not forget your humble fellow-worker, who shared your aspirations and shared your endeavours during years of absence from his country ; and I shall remember that on his return amidst you, you extended to him the hand of kindly appreciation and of brotherly love. There are ties which are stronger than the ties of blood, and they are the ties of a common country, common aims, and common endeavours. These are the ties which bind all castes and creeds in India as one united people, and these are the ties which will nerve our hands and strengthen our hearts in our future endeavours.

It is not possible for me, gentlemen, to refer to the various matters which you have dwelt upon in your kind Address, nor is it possible for me, to make an adequate reply to all that you have stated. You will permit me

therefore to confine my reply to only one or two salient points in your Address, and to say a few words on our present situation.

Literary Work of Educated Indians.

You have alluded in flattering terms to that humble literary work which has been, not a task, but a recreation and a joy to me during the last 30 years. That work has beguiled my saddest hours, solaced me in lonely hours, and refreshed me in the midst of overwhelming work of a different nature. I remember the solitary evenings when I was encamped in the midst of the rice-fields of Dakkhin Shahbazpur, a sea-washed island in the mouth of the Ganges, when I read Grant Duff's inspiring work on the History of the Mahrattas, and spent my nights in dreaming over a story of Sivaji. I remember the days when I travelled over Tippera, and occasionally crossed over to Hill Tippera, with Tod's spirited History of Rajasthan in my knapsack, and when I ventured to compose a story of Pratap Sinha. I remember how, after weary days spent over official work and official bundles in the heavy District of Mymensingh, I sought recreation and rest amidst the countless volumes of European and Indian scholars who have written on Indian Antiquities, and I conceived the idea of writing a connected history of Civilisation in Ancient India. In my long furloughs, and with the help of many Pandits whose learned names grace the pages of my works, I placed before my countrymen, in original and in translation, the substance of that vast body of Sacred Hindu Literature which is the

noblest heritage of the Hindu nation. And I did not consider that task complete till I was able, after my retirement from service, to place before the modern world, in a condensed and readable form, the great Epics of India. This, gentlemen, has been recreation of my life ; it has strengthened me and sustained me amidst multitudinous work, and I hope it will continue to help and sustain me in all my labours during the remaining days of my life.

Gentlemen, other and more gifted men than myself have devoted themselves to literary work during this half century, and surveying their work as a whole, it is possible to discern a certain direction which our literary work has taken. In one word, all the greatest works of the half century, about to close, centre round the cardinal idea of *Service to our Mother Land*. Till the middle of this century, we were taught to regard our ancient religion as a system of superstition, our ancient history as fable, and our own languages as unfit for ambitious literary endeavours. That we have outlived those times, that we have discarded those degrading notions, is due to the endeavours of our own countrymen, to that band of noble-hearted and patriotic men who explained to us our ancient religion, elucidated our ancient history, created our modern literature. The venerable Vidyasagar led the van of progress, and explained to us, when we were little children, what was great and glorious in our ancient religion and literature. The talented Madhu Sudan Datta turned away from fruitless compositions in English to his native language, and constructed that splendid fabric of Epic Poetry which is now the pride of his

countrymen. And the inimitable Bankim Chandra devoted a well-spent life in creating a body of literature which strengthens and inspires us, while it charms and fascinates. These were the pioneers of our contemporaneous literature, and I know of no truer patriot and no truer servant of his country than these gifted men who taught us to regard our country's religion and history and literature with a legitimate and manly admiration. For, gentlemen, that nation has no future which has no faith in itself ; that nation will know no progress which is not conscious of its own strength ; and our first and greatest indebtedness for the progress of this half century is to those who have taught us to have faith in ourselves. That progress has not been altogether perfect. We have great sins to answer for. No one knows, better than ourselves, our little weaknesses, our petty jealousies, our vanity and disunion, our self-seeking and selfishness. But making every allowance for our sins—and they are many—we may still confidently declare that in the broad results we have made a distinct progress in this half century. We stand farther ahead than where we were fifty years ago. We feel more strength in our endeavours and more faith in our hearts than we did fifty years ago. And we have more confidence in our country's cause than we had fifty years ago. To those who were the first pioneers in this progress is due our utmost gratitude and our loving homage. And we, who humbly follow in their footsteps, shall do well to remember that literature itself adds to its own title to glory, if it is consecrated by the love of mother land. If following the great masters of

this generation, we too succeed in contributing towards this end, and in inspiring in our children a firmer faith in our country's religion, a loftier admiration of our country's history and a manlier pride in our country's literature, our own literary work, humble and poor as they may be, shall not have been done in vain.

Administrative Work of Educated Indians.

Gentlemen, you have alluded in flattering terms to my administrative work during more than a quarter of a century. I look back with pleasure on those long years of my life during which I worked in friendliness and perfect good feeling with other members of the great Civil Service of India. Gentlemen, we understand them better, and they understand us better, when we work together with the same common object, and to the same common purpose. We learn to appreciate their hard work and devotion to duty, and they learn to appreciate our fitness for serving our own country. I can look back through long years to those days when I served under men for whom I still feel the highest admiration, and something more than admiration—men like Sir Charles Stevens, sometime Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, like Sir Antony MacDonnell, now Lieutenant-Governor of North-West, and Sir Steuart Bayley, now Member of the India Council. It is a pleasure to work and agree with such men, it is a pleasure even to differ from them in opinion. For, gentlemen, not unoften we discussed in perfect friendliness our opposing views, and I may say the value of the admission of Indians in the Civil Service consists

in the fact that they represent the views of their countrymen which do not often coincide with Official views. The weakness of the Civil Service lies in the fact that, with all its ability and honest work, it is not in touch with the people and does not know the people. And I look forward to the admission of more Indians in the Service to counteract this defect, and to make the administration of the country more sympathetic, more efficient, more in touch with the people.

Political Creed of Educated Indians.

Gentlemen, you have also alluded in exceedingly flattering terms to the humble endeavours I have made to advance the political cause of our country. Our political aim and endeavour, as I understand them, and as you all understand them, may be described in two words. We identify ourselves with the British rule and pledge our support to that rule at every sacrifice. And we demand under the British rule a larger share in the administration of our own concerns. This is my creed, and this is your creed, and there is not an educated Indian at the present day who does not in his heart subscribe to this creed. Educated India has identified itself with the British rule, and educated India seeks, through the continuance of the British rule, that larger measure of self-government and representation which it is our aim and endeavour to secure.

Self-government, under necessary control and supervision, is the secret of good government among all civilised communities. "It is an inherent condition of human

affairs," says the greatest political thinker of this century, the late John Stuart Mill, "that no intention, however sincere, of protecting the interests of others, can make it safe or salutary to tie up their own hands." This is a truth which has been illustrated in every page of the administration of India within the present century. There is no civilised country in the world in which the administrators are inspired with a more sincere desire to promote the material welfare of the people than India, and there is no civilised country in the world where that desire has been so imperfectly fulfilled, because the people have not been consulted, and have had no voice in the control of their own affairs.

I do not propose this evening to go over the entire field of Indian administration. But the attention of the whole country is at the present moment directed to the great famine which is desolating the western portions of India, and I wish, with your permission, to say a few words on the land-revenue administration of the last 40 years, which is mainly responsible, not in bringing about this famine, but in deepening and accentuating its disastrous effects.

Land Administration during 40 years.

Gentlemen, when the history of the Land Revenue Administration of India during these 40 years is fully written, it will be found to be one of the strangest and saddest in the annals of mankind. Forty years ago, India was desolated by a great famine, and I remember the days when as a school boy I heard harrowing

accounts of death and starvation in Northern India, when as school boys we were asked to contribute our humble mite for the relief of suffering and distress. The years of famine was at last over, and Lord Canning, who was then the Viceroy of India, sought to introduce some remedial measures, such as would permanently improve the condition of the people and make them more prosperous and resourceful.

Lord Canning's scheme of Land Settlement.

You know that an enquiry, instituted by Lord Canning, was made under the guidance of Col. Baird Smith, and that a recommendation was made that the Permanent Settlement of the Land Revenues, which had secured prosperity to the peasantry and the landlords of Bengal, should be extended to other parts of India. Lord Canning had the courage to place this recommendation before the Secretary of State for India, and the Secretary of State recorded a memorable resolution, describing the proposal as "a measure dictated by sound policy and calculated to accelerate the development of the resources of India, and to insure in the highest degree the welfare and contentment of all classes of Her Majesty's subjects in the country."

Had Lord Canning lived 5 years longer, India would have received this covered boon. But the great statesman died in 1862, and then followed one of those long and fruitless controversies which have so often ruined the best intentions, and marred the noblest objects of British rulers in India. The controversy went on for

twenty years between the Secretary of State's Council and Viceroy's Executive Council in India, and the strangest part of it is, that the people of India, whose welfare it was intended to secure, were not consulted and not informed as to what was going on. Gentlemen, we are not a race of savages, incapable of understanding our own material interests, nor have we been wanting in experienced and moderate and trusted leaders, commanding the confidence of the Government and the confidence of the people. In Bengal we had wise and thoughtful men like Ram Gopal Ghose, and Digambar Mitter and Kristo Dass Pal, and other provinces produced even more eminent men, like Madhava Rao and Dinkur Rao, who virtually ruled kingdoms, and secured order and prosperity out of chaos and misery. If these men had been consulted, if these men had seats in the Executive Council of the Viceroy, and even in the Council of the Secretary of State, if these men had been allowed to plead the cause of their suffering countrymen and to represent facts in their true light, the decision on Lord Canning's proposal might have been other than it was. But by a strange irony of fate, a strange exclusiveness on the part of the British Government, the leaders of the Indian nation were not consulted with regard to a measure intended to secure the welfare of the Indian nation, the long controversy was carried on among alien administrators secretly and in the dark, and in the end the interests of the people, who were not represented and not heard, were sacrificed. The proposal for a Permanent Settlement was rejected in 1883, and

the policy of continuing recurring settlements and recurring enhancements of revenue was continued to the impoverishment of the nation. Gentlemen, at the present moment we are hearing a great deal of the poverty of the Indian peasantry, and it was only last week that the present Viceroy of India raised his voice in this very hall for raising subscriptions for the relief of suffering and distress. Our sincere gratitude is due to that kind-hearted nobleman, who is struggling in the midst of appalling difficulties to relieve the suffering and distress of our countrymen ; but I will say this—and few who know the revenue history of the country will contradict me—that if Lord Canning's noble remedial measure had been passed after 1860, it would have been unnecessary for Lord Curzon to appeal to the generosity of the Indian nation for a distress so intense and so appalling in 1900.

Lord Ripon's Scheme of Land Settlement.

Gentlemen, I have brought down the history to 1883. Permit me to narrate the subsequent events in a few words. The Marquis of Ripon was our Viceroy from 1880 to 1884, and while His Lordship consented to the abandonment of the original proposal of a Permanent Settlement, he at the same time made a fresh proposal in a modified form. Looking at the harassing nature of the recurring settlements in Madras, Lord Ripon, in his Despatch of the 17th October, 1882, made a proposal that in all Districts which had been once surveyed and settled, the assessment should be regarded as final and

permanent, subject only to variations on the sole ground of rise or fall in the prices of food grains. You will see that this was not a Permanent Settlement such as Lord Canning had proposed ; it permitted the future increase of land-revenue on the ground of a rise in prices ; but subject to this one condition it was a Permanent Settlement of the land assessment and saved millions of cultivators from repeated and harassing surveys and reclassification of soils. Gentlemen, this equitable proposal was cordially accepted by the Madras Government in 1883, and for a time there was some hope again for the oppressed and impoverished cultivators of India.

But History repeats itself, at least in the revenue administration of India, and Lord Ripon's proposal had the same history as Lord Canning's previous proposal. For two or three years, Lord Ripon's proposal was under the consideration of the India Office at Whitehall. We, the people of India, knew nothing of it, our leading men were not informed, our representative men were not consulted. In the prolonged discussions which took place in the dark and secret chambers of Whitehall, we were not permitted to express our views or to plead our cause ; in the equally dark and secret chambers of the Viceroy's Executive Council, our voice was not heard, and our eyes could not penetrate. While our attention was engrossed in a *Legislative* measure known as the Ilbert Bill, an *Executive* proposal of far greater importance, because concerning the well-being or poverty of millions of our suffering and voiceless cultivators, was discussed by our alien rulers, here and in

England, and they did not think it worth their while to consult the leaders of the nation for whose welfare the proposal was meant. The result followed which might have been expected. So long as Lord Ripon remained at the helm of affairs in India, the India Office held its silence. Lord Ripon retired from India in December, 1884, and in January, 1885, came the reply from the India Office vetoing Lord Ripon's fair and moderate proposal. Gentlemen, I know of no sadder incident in the history of British rule in India than a decision like this, arrived at by the India Office at Whitehall, rejecting the moderate and beneficent proposals of the Indian Government, and condemning the population of India to continued poverty, misery and indebtedness. I repeat that if we had representatives in the Viceroy's Executive Council and in the Council of the Secretary of State, if we had been permitted to represent our interests and our wishes when Lord Ripon's proposal was secretly debated, the decision on the proposal might have been different, Madras would have been saved from harassing and repeated surveys and unjust enhancements; and if the proposal had been extended to Western India, Western India would have been free from the present famine in its intense form.

Mr. Cotton's scheme of a Land Settlement.

One more word on this subject, and I have done. There are still some administrators among us who are inspired by the benevolence of a Canning or a Ripon, and who place the happiness of the people before the

interests of land-revenue, and one of such administrators is now the Chief Commissioner of Assam. That Province, Gentlemen, has vast possibilities in the future, for most of the cultivable land in the Province is still waste grass-jungle. But it requires capital, it requires enterprise, and it requires leadership to bring the vast country under cultivation, to import cultivators, to build huts and villages for them, to supply them with ploughs and bullocks, to dig tanks for them, to do all that a far-sighted and benevolent Zemindar can do when he wishes to reclaim waste lands. Some sort of a Permanent Settlement is necessary to induce capital and enterprise, and the Chief Commissioner of Assam recommended some sort of a Permanent Settlement for Assam in order to open up the country. But the prospect of private Zemindars reaping the future benefits from the extension of cultivation in Assam did not commend itself to our rulers, and Mr. Cotton's proposal has been virtually disallowed. Much regret is often expressed by responsible rulers at the want of capital and enterprise in India. Gentlemen, if some of these fine words could be translated into deeds in the land-revenue department, if measures were adopted which would help enterprise in our cultivators, and lead to accumulation of capital in the hands of our landlords, India would not be so utterly resourceless as she is to-day. And I repeat, gentlemen, that if we had been represented in the Viceroy's Executive Council, if we could have taken a share in the discussions which took place in that Council over

Mr. Cotton's beneficent proposal, if we could have represented there the interests of the people for whose good all righteous Governments exist, the decision on the proposal might have been different from what it is. But we are not admitted to these secret discussions, the people are not allowed to speak in those Councils which shape the administration and decide on the fate of the Indian nation, and the result is that the land-revenue administration of India during these 40 years has, in spite of the best intentions, been fatal to the welfare of the nation.

General Administration during 40 years.

You will pardon me, gentlemen, for dwelling so long on the subject of land administration. Land is virtually the one means of subsistence left to us as a nation after our various industries have been killed by an unequal and unfair competition, and land-administration concerns our well-being as a nation more intimately than administration in any other department. And blunders in land administration are mainly responsible for the frequency and intensity of recent famines. I do not wish to take up your time by reviewing the administration in other departments ; but you will find on examination that, in every department, the administration, inspired by benevolent intentions, and carried on with undoubted ability, has failed to safeguard the interests of the people, because it has chosen to tie up the hands of the people. England and India have both enjoyed uninterrupted internal peace during the last 40 years ; within this period the

financiers of England, working under popular control and inspired by the genius of a popular leader like Mr. Gladstone, has reduced the public debts by over a hundred and seventy millions; but in India our finance ministers, working without the control of the people, have added to the people's debts by over a hundred millions sterling. England pays the whole or a part of the cost of the Imperial troops maintained in every self-governing English Colony; we, in this country, have in the midst of our distresses and famines to pay for the entire army, European and Indian, maintained in India, not merely for the defence of India, but for the safety of the British Empire in Asia and Africa. Every self-governing English Colony has taken measures to protect its infant industries against unfair competition; in India our ancient industries have been ruined, and no adequate measures have yet been taken by the Government to revive, as far as may be, those ancient industries on modern lines. Every self-governing English Colony protects its own interests against foreign labourers, in the most complete and efficacious manner, and you know the harsh laws of Natal against Her Majesty's Indian subjects who wish to work there for a living. In India cheap labour is free from the danger of foreign competition, but we are virtually excluded from the higher ranks of all services. From a Parliamentary return issued in 1892, it appears that nearly one-fifth of the revenue of India went in the payment of salaries to Europeans; and since 1892, the posts open to the people of the country have not been

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widened, but rather contracted under an ungenerous and reactionary policy especially in the Education and the Engineering Departments.

Gentlemen, I bring no charge against any class or individuals for these disappointing results of the last 40 years of British rule. I have said repeatedly, and I firmly believe, that there is a sincere desire in the higher administrators to promote and safeguard the interests of the people, and many of them, whom I have the honour of knowing, are men who are incapable of passing an order which they consider detrimental to the good of the people of India. But the most beneficent desire fails in its object, unless it is accompanied by a willingness to concede to the people some share in the control of the administration. Good administration in a great and civilised country is an impossibility, unless the people are allowed a share in the administration, and therefore, gentlemen, we ask for and demand a share in the control of the administration of our own concerns.

Lord George Hamilton on the Congress.

This is the claim which you have put forward loyally before the Government for years past, and this is the claim which I repeated in my Presidential speech at Lucknow in December last. I explained our common object as clearly and as forcibly as my knowledge of the English language enabled me to do, and while I expected my proposal to be criticised, I certainly did not expect it to be misunderstood. Nevertheless, I find that my proposal has been misunderstood by so high

an authority as the Secretary of State for India, Lord George Hamilton. In a speech which His Lordship made recently in London, he used these words in reference to my speech.

"I read the other day a remarkable speech by no unfriendly critic of British Administration in India. He admitted frankly and fully that British Administration had conferred great benefits on India, and that it was conducted *for* the people, but he wished to substitute another phase, that Government in India should be conducted *by* the people."

Gentlemen, I feel flattered by the kind and complimentary remarks made by so high an authority about my speech, but I wish to point out once more, as I have already pointed out elsewhere, that nowhere in my Lucknow speech did I propose to substitute the present form of Government by another phase, a Government conducted entirely by the people. *Theories*, as such, have no attraction for me ; I always endeavour to find out what is *practicable* under existing circumstances ; and all that I claim under the existing circumstances of India, is that we should have a voice, a share, in the control of administration of our own concerns. This I stated distinctly in my Lucknow speech, and this I repeat on the present occasion.

Exclusive Rule unexampled in History.

Gentlemen, History records scarcely any example of a great and civilised nation permanently placed under a system of government which allowed them no share in

the control over their own concerns. In ancient India, the entire village administration was in the hands of village communities or local landlords, and though there was no representation in its modern forms, kings and potentates listened to the wishes of the people and the leaders of the people in deciding on great questions of administration. In ancient Europe the policy of Imperial Rome was inspired by the same spirit, and you no doubt recollect the eloquent words in which Gibbon has described the treatment of conquered provinces by Rome :—

“The grandsons of the Gauls, who had besieged Julius Cæsar in Alesia, commanded legions, governed provinces, and were admitted into the Senate of Rome. Their ambition, instead of disturbing the tranquillity of the State, was intimately connected with its safety and greatness.”

The history of Moghal Rule in India may also be described in almost the same words, and we can truly say :—

“The grandsons of the Hindus who had fought against Babar in the field of Fatehpur Sikri, commanded legions, governed provinces, and were admitted into the Councils of Akbar. Their ambition, instead of disturbing the tranquillity of the State, was intimately connected with its safety and greatness.”

Shall we for ever continue to describe British Rule in India in words the reverse of this? Shall we for ever have to say :—

“The grandsons and great-grandsons of those who

helped the British in the field of Plassy and Wandewash, of Laswari and Assye, were excluded from the command of armies, from the government of provinces, from the Council of the Secretary of State for India, from the Executive Council of the Viceroy, from the Executive Councils of the Indian Provinces ?”

Future Prospects.

Gentlemen, the prospect before us is not inspiring. We are living in reactionary times ; we have achieved nothing of late ; we have lost a great deal of what we possessed before. I have felt this, as well as any of you ; I have made my humble endeavours against the tide of reaction ; I have struggled to save the wrecks of our established rights ; I have seen the object of my endeavours snatched away from me almost at the moment of triumph ; I have been beaten, defeated, swept away by the overwhelming tide. It would be idle to pretend that I did not feel the disappointment as bitterly and acutely as any one of you ; but I can truly declare before you that I have never, in bitterest moments of disappointment, been filled with despair. Our cause is so just, our demands are so moderate, our claims are so much in consonance with all wise governments, ancient and modern, that they are bound to triumph. We desire the continuance of the British rule in India ; we desire a strong and centralised British Government to maintain order and peace in this vast Empire ; but consistently with these objects, we desire admission in the Councils of the Empire, and a share in the control over the admj-

nistration of our own concerns. These are just and righteous and reasonable concessions, which the British nation shall not refuse, and which we are bound to obtain, if we are true to ourselves.

[The following was the text of the Address to which the above speech was a reply.]

We, the residents of Calcutta in public meeting assembled, beg to convey to you our deep sense of gratitude for the many services rendered by you to the cause of our country.

Being one of the earliest among our countrymen to enter into the Indian Civil Service, you have had a long and distinguished official career. As a Revenue and Settlement Officer, as the head of the Executive of many first-class Districts, and finally as the administrator of an important Division of these provinces, you won not only the admiration and confidence of the Government under which you served but also the respect and gratitude of the people over whom you ruled.

We are aware that one of the principal reasons of your early retirement from the Indian Civil Service was desire to be more useful to your country and an anxiety to direct the attention of our rulers to the aspirations and grievances of the people of India from a position of greater freedom. The way in which you have employed your time since your retirement has fully justified the wisdom of that step. You have, within a short time, done much, through the press and the platform, to

inform and enlighten public opinion in England on some of the most momentous questions of Indian administration—particularly about the recent change in the law of sedition in India and the Calcutta Municipal Bill. You have also sought to explain Indian questions to Members of the English Parliament and have made timely representations to the India Office regarding them. While helping in the election of some members of the British House of Commons, you have availed yourself of the opportunity thus afforded of pleading the cause of your countrymen before the English people. You have also spoken to crowded English audiences on several occasions on Famine and Land-assessment in India, and have been earnestly endeavouring to impress upon the authorities the close relation the one bears to the other. For these services and labours, so disinterestedly and ungrudgingly rendered, your grateful countrymen elected you President of the 15th Indian National Congress, the highest office in the gift of the people of this country.

Your services to literature have been no less conspicuous. You have considerably enriched our national literature by your works of fiction, presenting an important period of our past history in a most vivid and attractive form. By your scholarly and faithful translation of the Rig-Veda, you have helped to diffuse a wider knowledge of its treasures among our countrymen. Your masterly exposition of Ancient India in your historical works and your rendering of our great national epics into English verse have served to interpret

to the nations of the West the India of the past and to evoke an interest in the India of the present.

In conclusion, we earnestly and sincerely pray that long may it be given to you to serve your country with the devotion and zeal you have hitherto evinced in her cause.

We Remain,

SIR,

YOUR GRATEFUL FELLOW-CITIZENS.

XI. FAREWELL SPEECH IN BOMBAY.

*[Delivered in the rooms of the Presidency Association
on March 14, 1900.]*

MR. PRESIDENT and Gentlemen,—I feel the great honour done to me by this Association in conveying to me their kind wishes and farewell greetings on the eve of my departure for Europe, and I sincerely appreciate the manner in which the Chairman has alluded to my humble services in the cause which we have all at heart. Nothing inspires me with greater confidence in our cause, and greater faith in the future, than to find that educated and patriotic men in all parts of India, living at a distance of a thousand miles or more from each other, join in the same endeavours, and devote themselves to the same cause—the cause of a loyal devotion to the British Rule—and loyal endeavours introduce reforms and extend self-government for the improvement of the administration and the welfare of the people. This is the purpose which animates educated men in all parts of India, which I have visited within the last three months, in Madras, in Calcutta, in Lucknow and last though not the least, in the enlightened city of Bombay. And these endeavours, which are always needful, are specially so at the present moment, when our country is suffering from a severe pestilence and a wide-spread famine, and when we, the people of India, should do all we

can to loyally help the Government by co-operating in the measures undertaken for relief, and by submitting our advice and suggestions, based on our knowledge of the condition of our suffering countrymen.

The New Governor of Bombay.

Amidst all these disasters and calamities, you have worked in Bombay in a spirit of moderation, which has earned for you a graceful recognition from the kind-hearted nobleman who was lately the Governor of Bombay. You have chosen to forget the early mistakes of his administration, you have recognized the qualities of his generous heart, and you have parted with him with sincere expressions of good wishes and loyalty. And you have extended a cordial welcome to the nobleman who has now come in your midst, and who brings with him the best traditions of good government—of government for the good of the people of India. Gentlemen, it is now more than thirty years since the time when I was living in England as a young student, and when Sir Stafford Northcote was the Secretary of State for India. In those early days I learned to entertain a sincere and genuine admiration for Sir Stafford Northcote's conscientious zeal for the good of the people of India, which I have never since forgotten in life. I do not often use the language of vain compliments, but I am expressing to you my candid and honest opinion, when I state that within the last thirty years there has been no Secretary of State for India, Nobleman or Commoner, Conservative

or Liberal, who has worked with a more single-hearted devotion for the good of the people of India than Sir Stafford Northcote. I am expressing to you my candid and honest opinion when I state that, great and valuable as have been the services of all Secretaries of State for India, there has been no Secretary of State within my life-time who brought to the performance of his duties a higher and more sincere regard for the good of the people. This, gentlemen, is high praise when it is honestly spoken, not by political colleagues in England, but by the people of India, and this high praise was won by Lord Iddlesleigh. And let us hope and trust, this high praise will be won by his son whom you so cordially welcomed to these shores only the other day.

Representations of the People.

Gentlemen, you have all read the account, which appeared in the papers, of a dinner which was given to Lord Northcote on the eve of his departure as Governor of Bombay; and you have all read the speech which the present Secretary of State for India made on that occasion. Lord George Hamilton was good enough to refer on this occasion in complimentary terms to my Presidential speech at the Lucknow Congress in December last; and if his Lordship somewhat misapprehended our aims and aspirations, I do not wish to dwell on the fact on this occasion. Our aim and our aspiration under the British Rule is not to change the present form of Government, as Lord George Hamilton supposed, but to maintain and

strengthen the present system of Government by popular support and by some representation of popular opinion. I wish on the present occasion rather to refer to the other portion of Lord George Hamilton's speech, in which his Lordship urged on his Excellency, the new Governor of Bombay, to consider the representations of the people in a generous and liberal spirit, to reject them when they are impracticable, and to accede to them when they are practicable, and moderate. Gentlemen, if we could presume to give any advice to his Excellency, we would couch it in the very same words ;—consider the representations of the people in a liberal and generous spirit, reject them when they are impracticable, accede to them when they are reasonable and moderate. Our complaint in the past has been that our representations, whether reasonable or unreasonable, have not been heard at all ; that the Government has been guided entirely by official opinions which were sometimes sound and sometimes influenced by causeless panic ; and that the most moderate and practicable representations of the people have received virtually no hearing and no consideration in the work of administration performed ostensibly for the good of the people.

Executive Council of Bombay.

What are our representations ? It is not possible for me this evening to enumerate them all within the time at my disposal but I will mention a few to indicate their drift and their purpose. You have in this Presidency an

Executive Council formed of trained and experienced English administrators who help the Governor by their advice and deliberations in the affairs of the State. Our humble representation is, appoint one experienced, and moderate Indian in that Council to represent the views of the people, and specially to represent the interests of the millions of cultivators and the industrial population who form the bulk of the people. This would be not introducing a new form of Government, but strengthening the present system of Government by bringing it in touch with the people. This would be, not taking away the control of affairs from the hands of the present rulers, but conceding to us a humble share in that control, so that our opinions may be heard and our views represented in that secret Council Chamber which shapes the destiny of the nation. Is there any Ruler of Bombay who would not feel himself better informed and more in touch with the people if he had by his side an experienced representative of the people to help him and advise him in the management of the affairs of the people? Is there any Governor of Bombay who would not feel himself stronger for such advice and support at all times, and specially in times of famine and pestilence and panic? And if this is a moderate and reasonable and practicable suggestion, may we not expect that his Excellency the present Governor of Bombay will find it possible within his term of office to consider it, in the words of Lord George Hamilton, in a liberal and generous spirit, and make his rule both stronger and more popular by acceding to it?

the people of India from getting a fair share of the appointments. I am not speaking only of the great Civil Service of India, but of all services—the educational service, the medical service, the police service, the engineering service, the post and telegraph services, the jail and forest services—all the great services, of India. By a system of exclusion, unexampled in the history of any civilised country in ancient or modern times, we, the people of India, are virtually excluded from the higher ranks of these services, and all the higher appointments in these services, barring a very small percentage, are held by Europeans. I have said, this is a state of things unexampled in the history of any civilised country, for I can call to mind no instance, in ancient or modern history, in which the rulers of a civilised and great country so entirely excluded the people of the country from all the higher ranks of the civil administration. The British nation do not desire this act of injustice to be perpetrated and continued. Her Majesty the Queen-Empress has declared in the most solemn manner her desire to admit all her subjects to all offices without distinction of race, caste or creed ; and yet the rules of admission to the Civil services have been framed so, as to virtually exclude us from holding a reasonable share of the high appointments in our own country. From a parliamentary return issued in 1892, it appears that nearly one-fifth of the revenues of India went in the payment of salaries to Europeans drawing more than a thousand rupees a year. You have asked that this unjust and ungenerous rule of

exclusion should be modified, and that after we have been educated for three generations in English schools and colleges, we may now be permitted, under more equitable rules of admission, to have a fair share of those appointments for which we have proved our fitness. Is this representation unfair or unreasonable? If they be not so, if they be reasonable and moderate, may we not expect his Excellency the new Governor of Bombay will signalize his administration by modifying the present system of exclusion, and admitting us to a fair share of those high appointments to which our claim is recognized by our Queen and Sovereign?

**Relief to Cultivators by moderate and
fixed Land Assessments.**

But, gentlemen, I turn from these and many other subjects, on which you have from time to time submitted your representations to the Government, to that vaster subject which is at present engaging the attention of his Excellency, the poverty and distress of the agricultural population, and the famine which is desolating Western India at the present moment. If there is one subject which should be above the sphere of party controversies, and should appeal to the humanity of all, it is the subject of those famines which are desolating the country so frequently in recent years. And if any of you, gentlemen, have visited relief centres as I have recently done, and seen hundreds and thousands of starving and tottering men and women, our brothers and our sisters, crawling along the roads, resting under trees, lying down on the

wayside perhaps to die before the hand of relief can reach them, you will have felt, as I felt, that this calamity, this overwhelming scene of human suffering and distress and death, cries to Heaven for a permanent redress. The way in which a permanent redress can be provided, and the condition of the agricultural population of India can be improved is not unknown to the authorities. In Provinces like Bengal, where private zemindars make their own arrangements with ryots, the cultivators do not pay more than one-sixth the gross produce of their lands as rent, and in many districts they pay a still more moderate rent. In parts of India like Madras and Bombay where the Government is virtually the landlord, the land-tax is screwed up to something near one-third of the gross produce, and the peasantry is necessarily reduced to poverty and indebtedness. In Bengal there is no such thing as enhancement of rents except on very strong and equitable grounds which landlords have to establish in Courts of Justice ; in Bombay and Madras, every recurring settlement means an enhancement of the land-tax, and this uncertainty of assessments paralyses agricultural industry and impoverishes the peasantry. In Bengal I have known the cultivators of entire districts fall back on their past savings in years of failure of crops ; in Bombay and Madras there are no such savings to fall back upon, and every year of bad harvests is a year of famine and of deaths. These facts are not unknown to the authorities, and able and distinguished administrators have from time to time suggested the true remedy. As far back as 1862, Lord Canning proposed a permanent

settlement for all India ; and if Lord Canning had lived five years longer, his proposal would have been acted upon, and famines in their present intense and disastrous forms would have been unknown. Lord Mayo and Lord Northbrook placed on record their view against frequent and harassing surveys and settlements ; and acting on their suggestions, Lord Ripon finally proposed a modified form of permanent settlement which seemed to meet all objections and to provide a satisfactory solution to the whole question. Lord Ripon claimed for the State the right to enhance revenue in the future on the ground of a rise in prices ; but he assured the cultivators against recurring settlements and against all enhancements except on this one equitable ground, Gentlemen, this equitable solution was accepted and acted upon in Madras, and I am informed, also in Bombay ; but Lord Ripon left India in December 1884, and his wise decision was vetoed by the Secretary of State for India in January 1885. And India has thus once more been plunged into another era of uncertain assessments, frequent enhancements, agricultural distress, and disastrous famines. We appeal, gentlemen, to the new Governor of Bombay, who comes in our midst with the best traditions of good government, to fix a moderate limit to the land-tax, which in Northern India does not exceed ten percent. of the produce. We appeal to him in this year of famine and distress to extend to us that relief which is connected with the names of Canning and of Ripon, and to proclaim that in districts which have been once surveyed and settled, and in which most

of the cultivable lands are under cultivation, there shall be no further harassing surveys and settlements, and no enhancement of rents except on the sole and equitable ground of a rise in prices. Gentlemen, I thank you once more for the cordial welcome you have given me and for the kind farewell you have accorded to me. This time to-morrow, I shall be on the sea on my way to Europe, but wherever I may be, your aims and aspirations shall be mine, your endeavours shall be my endeavours, and we shall work for a common purpose and a common object—for the happiness and prosperity and good government of our common motherland.

XII. MAHA-BHARATA, THE ILIAD OF INDIA.

*[Paper read before the Royal Society of Literature,
London, on June 14, 1899. Mr. Brabrook, C. B.
presiding.]*

AMONG the many brilliant discoveries in the different departments of human knowledge for which the present century will always be remembered in the history of mankind, the discoveries in the sphere of Archaeology and Ancient History are by no means the least brilliant or the least important. The successful researches of scholars and explorers in Egypt and in Babylonia, in India and in China, have effected a complete revolution in our knowledge, have widened the horizon of human history, and have broadened our ideas of the destiny of the human race. There are not a few of us, present here to-night, who were taught in our early school days to look for the origin of human civilisation, of philosophy, arts, and religion, in the annals of Greece and Rome, some six or seven hundred years before the birth of Christ.

But we have revised these early impressions, and we now trace the origin of civilisation from a period, not some hundred years, but some thousands of years before the birth of Christ. It almost seems as if an impenetrable mist which bounded the horizon of our knowledge has suddenly lifted, and beyond that mist, which marked the extreme limit of our historical knowledge, we now perceive for the first time long vistas of human civilisation.

stretching back through endless cycles and ages. This wonderful extension of our historical knowledge, almost within our lifetime, may be not inaptly compared to the experience of many a traveller who visits lofty mountains for the first time in his life. It often occurs to a traveller in the Himalayas, as it occurred to me some twelve years ago at Darjeeling, that during the first few days of his visit he sees nothing before him but the lower ranges of hills, rising to a height of eight or ten thousand feet; and he admires these graceful ranges in all their wild beauty. Suddenly one fine morning the mists clear up, and the traveller turns his admiring eyes from the lower ranges, which bounded his horizon before, to the loftiest mountains in the world—the wonderful peaks of the snow-covered Himalayas—rising to a height of 28,000 or 29,000 feet. The first sight of this lofty array of stupendous peaks strikes him speechless with wonder, and creates in him, as it created in me, an impression never to be forgotten in life. It is with something like this feeling of wonder that we turn from the civilisation of Greece and Rome to the hoary antiquity of Egypt and Babylon, of China and of India, which has now been revealed to us.

So far as we know now, the edifice of human civilisation was first reared in these four gifted lands, and curiously enough it was reared by the four great families of men of the old world. The Semitic race developed their earliest civilisation in Babylon, the Hamitic race in Egypt, and the Turanian race in China; and the great Aryan race who now rule the best portions of Europe.

Asia, and America, developed the earliest form of their civilisation in India.

The early civilisation of India must necessarily have a greater interest for all of us than the civilisation of other ancient countries, not only because India and England are at the present moment bound together by political ties, and are proud to own the sovereignty of the beloved Queen whose eightieth birthday we have recently celebrated, but also because early Aryan thought and culture must always have a deeper interest for all Aryan nations. We cannot fix the earliest date of Indian civilisation, but we know from records which have been unearthed in Babylon and Egypt, that some two or three thousand years before Christ, a Sanscrit-speaking nation, *i. e.* the ancient Hindus, lived on the banks of the Indus, and exported cotton and other products and manufactures of their land to Babylonia and to Egypt. For many centuries the Hindus lived in the Punjab, and it was there that they composed these beautiful hymns in their beautiful Sanscrit language, some of which are still left to us and are known under the collective name of the 'Rig Veda.' The period during which the Hindus lived in the Punjab is therefore known as the Vedic Age, and extended from some unknown date, two or three thousand years before Christ, to about fourteen or fifteen hundred years before the Christian era.

But to-night I wish to speak—not of the remote Vedic Age—but of the next succeeding age, the Epic Age, of ancient India, extending from fourteen or fifteen hundred years B.C. to about a thousand or

eight hundred years B.C. You will, therefore, perceive that the Epic Age of India partially corresponds in point of time with the Epic Age of Greece, and that the great war of the 'Maha-Bharata' was contemporaneous, within a century or two, with the Trojan War. But while the Epic Age of Greece was the very infancy of Greek civilisation, the Epic Age of India is a comparatively recent period of Indian history, and comes after a long period of an anterior and remote civilisation. India was old in her civilisation in the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries before Christ, when Greece was in her early infancy, receiving her first nourishment from the East.

In this Epic Age, extending, roughly speaking, from 1500 to 1000 B.C., the whole of Northern India had attained a high state of civilisation, and was parcelled out into small states and kingdoms, flourishing side by side, bound together by a common language, a common civilisation, and a common religion, and thus forming a great confederation of cultured Hindu nations. Among these nations there were four which distinguished themselves above the rest by their prowess, arts, and civilisation. Two of these nations, the Kurus and the Panchalas, lived along the upper course of the Ganges, and their great war is celebrated in the great epic, the 'Maha-Bharata,' which may justly be called the Iliad of ancient India. Two other nations, the Kosalas and the Videhas, lived in the tracts of the country now known as Oudh and North Behar, and their supposed deeds are celebrated in another old

Indian epic, the 'Ramayana,' which may be called the Odyssey of ancient India. These are the two great epics of ancient India, and it is of the first of these, the Iliad of India, that I wish to give a brief account to-night.

The 'Maha-Bharata' is a vast and encyclopædic work, and is, in fact, the growth of ages. Its subject is a great war of the Kurus or Bharatas—hence the name 'Maha-Bharata,' which means the great Bharata nation,—and the authorship of the work is ascribed to a saint, Vyasa, who is supposed to have lived at the time of the war. But apparently the work has grown with the lapse of centuries. Songs and ballads relating to the war were composed and recited in the courts of Northern India during the centuries immediately succeeding the event, and thus the war became the centre of a cycle of poems, traditions, and legends, a thousand years before Christ, even as Arthur and Charlemagne became the centres of legends and songs in Europe a thousand years after Christ. The real facts of the war were obliterated by age; legendary or mythological heroes became the principal actors, and thus an imaginary account of an historical event grew up and became the national epic of the great confederation of ancient Hindu nations. Every succeeding generation of poets had something to add, every distant nation of Northern India interpolated some account of its deeds in the old national chronicle, every preacher of a new creed sought to have in it some sanction for the truths he promulgated. Legal codes and rules of

caste were interpolated, and all the floating mass of tales, traditions, legends, and myths, for which ancient India was always famous, found shelter under the expanding wings of this wonderful epic. By the first centuries after Christ the epic had grown to nearly its present proportions, a poem of over ninety thousand couplets, in which the crystal rill of the epic itself is almost lost in a sea-like delta of religious and didactic episodes, legends, and myths, tales and traditions.

To ancient Indians this storehouse and encyclopædia of Indian thought and tradition was suitable because it was the study of their life-time. But the modern reader has a wider field of knowledge and a greater variety of subjects before him; he has to economise his time and to arrange and classify his subjects; and in order to judge the great Indian epic he has to sift it from the mass of superincumbent matter in which he finds it embedded. Fortunately this is still possible. The leading incidents and characters of the 'Maha-Bharata' are still clearly discernible, uninjured by the mass of foreign matter in which they lie covered, even as the immortal marbles of ancient Greece and Rome remained embedded in earth or amidst ruins for centuries, and have now been recovered, and form the most valuable treasures of the museums of modern Europe. It is in this manner that the leading story of the ancient Indian epic has to be recovered, and to be judged as an epic, and as a work of art.

Judged in this way the Indian epic will be pronounced one of the greatest works of art the human mind has

ever conceived. And it is in that highest form of art—the delineation of human character and the development of human incidents—that the ‘Maha-Bharata’ takes its pre-eminent place among the master works of the world. No work of the imagination, except perhaps the Iliad, is so rich and so true as this Indian epic in the portraiture of the human character—not in torment and suffering as in Dante, not under strong and overwhelming passions as in Shakespeare, but human character in its calm dignity, in healthy action and in healthy repose.

As we read this venerable, ancient poem, the first epic of the Aryan race, the characters live and move round us, act and suffer amid us, distinct and lifelike, and with all the simplicity and truth of ancient life. The old monarch of the Kurus, sightless and feeble, but majestic in his ancient grandeur, is the Priam of the Indian Iliad. The venerable Bhishma, righteous and truthful and unconquerable in war; the doughty Drona, a warrior priest and a Brahman fighter; the proud and fiery Karna—each of them has a distinct character of his own.

The righteous and pious Yudhishtir, the stalwart and “tiger-waisted” Bhima, and the accomplished and “helmet-wearing” Arjun, are the Agamemnon, the Ajax, and the Achilles of the Indian epic. The Kuru prince Duryodhan is proud and jealous, vindictive and relentless, and as a character of flesh and blood, as a man of undying hatred and unyielding determination, has no superior in the epic of any nation. And

Krishna possesses a character higher than that of Ulysses ; unmatched in human wisdom, ever striving for justice and peace, he is unrelenting in war when war has begun. And the women of the Indian epic possess characters equally marked and pronounced. The stately and majestic Kuru queen Gandhari ; the doting and loving mother Pritha ; the proud and scornful Draupadi, nursing her wrath till her wrongs are fearfully revenged ; and the bright and brilliant and sunny Subhadra—these are distinct images pencilled by the hand of a true master in the realms of creative imagination.

Such is the opinion which is formed from the study of the epic as an epic, separated and recovered from the mass of foreign matter in which it lies embedded.

I may perhaps be permitted to mention here that I have myself recently ventured to attempt this task, and to translate into English verse those portions of the 'Maha-Bharata' which narrate the leading incidents of the real epic. My plan is very simple ; I have added nothing to the original, and, except in the description of the actual war itself, I have condensed very little. I have simply selected those passages which tell the leading incidents of the epic, separated them from all episodical matter, and have placed them before the English reader in an English metre which best preserves the rhythmical movement, the sweep and majestic flow of the Sanscrit *Sloka*. I have generally rendered each Sanscrit couplet into a corresponding English couplet, thereby making my translation tolerably faithful ; but

I have not attempted a literal, word for word translation, but have rather sought to convey the spirit and the full import and significance of the original in my English version. I may be pardoned for making these few remarks about my own work ; it was necessary to do so, as in the brief narration of the story of the epic which I am about to undertake it will be necessary to read a few passages from my own translation. I may add that while the selected passages which I have translated virtually tell the story within the reasonable limit of about 2000 English couplets, instead of 90,000 couplets as in the original work. With these remarks I now turn to the story.

According to the epic, Pandu was the king of the Kurus or Bharatas, but died early. His brother Dhritarashtra became king, and brought up the five sons of Pandu along with his own hundred sons. The jealousies and wars between those cousins, *i. e.* between the five sons of Pandu and the hundred sons of Dhritarashtra, form the subject of the epic.

Yudhisthir, the eldest son of Pandu, was a man of truth and piety. Bhima, the second son, was a stalwart fighter, and, as I have said before, is the Ajax of the poem. Arjun, the third son, is the hero, the Achilles of the poem. On the other side, Duryodhan, the eldest son of the Kuru king, was renowned for his strength of character and his undying hatred for his cousins.

The princes were all instructed in arms, and a great tournament was held, in which the five sons of Pandu

and the hundred sons of Dhritā-rashtra showed their proficiency in arms. Arjun, the third son of Pandu, excelled all others, until suddenly an unknown warrior, Karna, entered the arena, and then Arjun met his equal and his lifelong rival. The rivalry between Arjun and Karna is the leading thought of the Indian epic, as the rivalry between Achilles and Hector is the leading thought of the Greek epic.

I will quote only a few lines describing the first advent of these great rivals—the real heroes of the epic—on the field of tournament.

THE ADVENT OF ARJUN.

Gauntleted and jewel-girdled, with his bow of ample height,
Archer Arjun, pious-hearted, to the gods performed a rite ;
Then he stepped forth proud and stately in his golden mail
encased,

Like the sunlit cloud of evening with the radiant rainbow
graced ;

And a gladness stirred the people all around the listed plain,
Beat of drum and blare of trumpet rose with *Sankha's* festive
strain ;

“Mark the gallant son of Pandu, whom the happy Pritha bore ;
Mark the heir of Indra's prowess, matchless in his arms and
lore ;

Mark the chief of dauntless valour, peerless in his skill of arms ;
Mark the prince of stainless virtue, decked with grace and
varied charms !”

Pritha heard such grateful accents borne aloft unto the sky,
Milk of love suffused her bosom, tear of joy was in her eye !

* * * * *

Now the voices of the people died away and all was still ;
Arjun to his proud preceptor showed his might and match-
less skill,

Towering high or lowly bending, on the turf or on his car,
With his bow and ample quiver Arjun waged the mimic war,
Targets on the wide arena, mighty tough or wondrous small,
With his arrows still unfailing, Arjun pierced them ore and
all ;

Wild-boar shaped in plates of iron coursed the wide extending field,
 In its jaws five glist'ning arrows sent the archer wondrous skilled ;
 Cow-horn by a thread suspended was by winds unceasing swayed,
 One and twenty well-aimed arrows on this moving mark he laid ;
 And with equal skill his rapier did the god-like Arjun wield,
 Whirling round his mace of battle ranged the spacious tourney field !

THE ADVENT OF KARNA.

Now the feats of arms are ended, and the closing hour draws nigh,
 Music's voice is hushed in silence, slow disperse the passers by.
 Hark ! like welkin-shaking thunder wakes a deep and deadly sound,
 Clank and din of warlike weapons burst upon the tented ground !
 Are the solid mountains splitting ? Is it bursting of the earth ?
 Is it tempest's pealing accent whence the lightning takes its birth ?
 Thoughts like these alarm the people, for the sound is dread and high,
 And upon the lofty gateway turns the crowd with anxious eye !

* * * *

Pale, before the unknown warrior, gathered nations part in twain,
 Conqueror of hostile cities lofty Karna treads the plain,
 In his golden mail accoutred, in his rings of yellow gold,
 Like a moving cliff in stature towering comes the chieftain bold !
 Like a tusker in his fury, like a lion in his ire,
 Like the sun in noontide radiance, like the all-consuming fire,
 Lion-like in build and manner, majestic as a golden palm,
 Blessed with every manly virtue, peerless, dauntless, proud and calm !

Karna then showed his proficiency in arms, rivalling the hitherto unrivalled Arjun. The crowds applauded him with acclamation, and Prince Duryodhan, who hated his cousins, the sons of Pandu, embraced Karna as his friend and supporter. Arjun was fired by a dark but natural jealousy on meeting this new rival, and angry words were spoken. And a fight between the two rivals was about to ensue, probably ending in the death of one of the combatants; but the day was ended. Evening fell, and the combatants parted—to remain rivals ever after in life and unto death.

The jealousy between the five sons of Pandu and the hundred sons of Dhriti-rashtra increased from day to day, and at last the Pandavs, *i.e.* the sons of Pandu, were exiled. Prince Duryodhan laid a dark scheme to kill them. They were sent to a house in a distant town, and at the appointed time fire was set to this house. But the Pandavs with their mother escaped the conflagration, and travelled unknown in distant lands in the guise of Brahmans.

In course of time they heard of the approaching wedding of the princess of the Panchala kingdom—the renowned Draupadi, the heroine of the epic. Princes and suitors came from all lands, and it was ordained that whoever could hit a distant target through a revolving disc would win the bride. The five Pandavs came to the assembly dressed as Brahmans. After days of rejoicing and feasting the bride Draupadi appeared on the scene. Her brother led her by the hand amidst the assembled suitors, and introduced them to her, one by one, thus :

DRAUPADI AND HER SUITORS (*condensed*).

"Brave Duryodhan and his brothers, princes of the
 Kurland,
 Karna, proud and peerless archer, sister, seek thy noble
 hand;
 And Gandhara's warlike princes, Bhoja's monarch true
 and bold,
 And the son of mighty Drona, all bedecked in gems and
 gold !
 King and prince from Matsya kingdom grace his noble
 wedding feast,
 Monarchs from more distant regions north and south and
 west and east,
 Tamralipta and Kalinga on the eastern ocean wave,
 Pattan's port, whose hardy children western ocean's dangers
 brave !
 From the distant land of Madra ear-borne monarch Salva
 came,
 And from Dwarka's sea-girt regions Valadeva known to
 fame,
 Valadeva and his brother, Krishna, sprung from Yadu's
 race,
 Of the Vrishni clan descended, soul of truth and righteous
 grace !
 This is mighty Jayadratha, come from Sindhu's sounding
 shore,
 Famed for warlike feats of valour, famed alike for sacred
 lore ;
 This is fair Kosala's monarch, whose bright deeds our
 heralds sing ;
 This is sturdy Sisupala, Chedi's proud and peerless king !
 This is mighty Jarasandha, come from far Magadha's land ;
 These are other princely suitors, sister, eager for thy hand.
 All the wide earth's warlike rulers seek to shoot the distant
 aim ;
 Princess, whoso hits the target, choose as thine that prince
 of fame !"

All the princes and suitors then tried to hit the target,
 and all failed one after another. Then Arjun, concealed
 in the guise of a Brahman, rose and performed the feat,
 and the father of the bride gave away the princess to the

victor. The disappointed suitors could stand it no longer. Their humiliation and rage were redoubled when they saw a youth, apparently of the Brahman or priestly caste, win the bride whom the kings of the Kshatra or warrior caste had failed to win. And in a moment of anger they rose in tumult, determined to kill the bride's father in their wrath. I read a few lines here, as the account of the disappointed suitors in the 'Maha-Bharata' reminds one of a well-known passage in Homer's Odyssey.

THE RAGE OF DISAPPOINTED SUITORS.

Spake the suitors, anger-shaken, like a forest tempest-torn,
As Panchala's courteous monarch came to greet a Brahman-born :

"Shall he like the grass of jungle trample us in haughty pride,
To a prating priest and Brahman wed the proud and peerless bride ?

To our hopes like nourished saplings shall he now the fruit deny ?

Monarch proud who insults monarchs, sure a traitor's death shall die !

Honour for his rank we know not, have no mercy for his age,
Perish foe of crowned monarchs, victim to our righteous rage !
Hath he asked us to his palace, favoured us with royal grace,
Feasted us with princely bounty but to compass our disgrace ?

In this concourse of great monarchs, glorious like a heavenly hand,

Doth he find no likely suitor for his beauteous daughter's hand ?

And this right of *swayamvara*, so our sacred laws ordain,
Is for warlike monarchs only, priests that custom shall not stain !

If this maiden on a Brahman casts her eye, devoid of shame,
Let her expiate her folly in a pyre of blazing flame !

Leave the priestling in his folly, sinning through a Brahman's greed,

For we wage on war with Brahmans and forgive a foolish deed ;

Much we owe to holy Brahmans for our kingdom, wealth
 and life,
 Blood of priest or wise preceptor shall not stain our noble
 strife :
 In the blood of sinful Drupad we the righteous laws
 maintain,
 Such disgrace in future ages monarchs shall not meet
 again !"
 Spake the suitors, tiger-hearted, iron-handed, bold and strong,
 Fiercely bent on blood and vengeance blindly rose the
 maddened throng !
 On they came, the angry monarchs, thirsting for revengeful
 strife,
 Drupad 'midst the holy Brahmans fled in terror of his life !
 Like wild tusked of the jungle rushed the suitors on their
 foes,
 Calm and bold, against the suitors, Bhima and proud Arjan
 rose !

The passage reminds one of the scene in the Odyssey
 in which the suitors of Penelope turned on her unknown
 husband, and Ulysses and his son were a match for them
 all. But in the Indian epic this tumult was not followed
 by actual bloodshed ; Krishna, the friend and kinsman
 of the Pandav brothers, pacified the enraged suitors, and
 Arjun led away the bride. Here Krishna appears for the
 first time on the scene as a peace-maker, as a wise and
 gifted chieftain who strove for right and justice, and
 throughout the epic he retains his character.

A curious incident here follows, which is somewhat
 discordant with the customs and manners of the Hindu
 nation. It is said that five brothers returned with the
 bride to a potter's house where they were living on alms,
 according to the custom of Brahmans, and they reported
 to their mother, "We have received a great gift to-day."
 Their mother, not knowing what the gift was, replied,

“Enjoy the gift among you in common.” And as a mother’s mandate is holy in India, and cannot be disregarded, Draupadi became the common wife of the five brothers. The custom of brothers marrying a wife in common prevails in Thibet and among some hill tribes in India, but has never prevailed among the Aryan Hindus in ancient or modern times, and this legend in the Hindu epic is therefore inexplicable.

Judging from the main incidents of the poem, Draupadi might be regarded as wedded to the eldest brother Yudhisthir, though won by the skill of the third brother Arjun. For Bhima, the second brother, had already mated himself to a female in a forest, and had by her a son who distinguished himself afterwards in the great war. Arjun, too, married the sister of Krishna, and had by her a son who also distinguished himself later in the war. On the other hand, the eldest brother Yudhisthir took to himself no wife save Draupadi, and she was crowned with Yudhisthir at the imperial sacrifice which shortly followed. Notwithstanding the legend of the communal marriage, therefore, Draupadi might be regarded as the wife of the eldest brother Yudhisthir, and this assumption would be in keeping with Hindu customs and laws, ancient and modern.

After this marriage, the five brothers came out of their disguise and demanded a share of the Kuru kingdom, and their demand could no longer be gainsaid. The kingdom was divided ; Prince Duryodhan retained the best portion on the Ganges, and his cousins got a wild tract of country on the Jumna. They cleared the forest,

built a capital on the site of modern Delhi, and performed a great imperial sacrifice at which all the neighbouring kings, including Duryodhan himself, were present by invitation.

The cousins thus ruled two neighbouring kingdoms in peace for many years, but Duryodhan's hatred and jealousy were undying. Yudhisthir, with all his virtues and piety, had one failing—a besetting sin of the age—viz. a passion for gambling. Duryodhan knew this weakness; he challenged Yudhisthir to a game of dice, and defeated him unfairly, using loaded dice. As Yudhisthir lost game after game he was stung with his losses, and with the recklessness of a gambler staked everything and lost everything. He staked his newly acquired kingdom on the Jumna; he staked his brothers' and then his own liberty; and lastly he staked his wife Draupadi and lost her. One of the most stirring passages in the whole poem is the scene where the proud Queen Draupadi is dragged to the Council Hall as a slave woman, and insulted.

DRAUPADI INSULTED.

“Silent all? And will no chieftain rise to save a woman's life,
 Will no hand or voice be lifted to defend a virtuous wife?
 Lost is Kuru's righteous glory, lost is Bharat's ancient name,
 Lost is warrior's warlike prowess, lost is monarch's kingly frame!
 Wherefore else like painted warriors tamely view this impious scene,
 Wherefore gleam not righteous weapons to protect an outraged queen?”

Bhishma, hath he lost his virtue ? Drona, hath he lost his
 might ?
 Hath the monarch of the Kurus ceased to battle for the
 right ?
 Wherefore are ye mute and voiceless, councillors of mighty
 fame,
 Vacant eye and palsied right arm watch this deed of
 Kuru's shame ?
 Spake Draupadi slender-waisted, and her words were stern
 and high,
 Anger flamed within her bosom and the tear was in her eye !
 And her sparkling speaking glances fell on Pandu's sons
 like fire,
 Stirred in them a mighty passion and a thirst for vengeance
 dire !
 Lost their empire, wealth, and fortune, little recked they
 for the fall,
 But Draupadi's pleading glances like a poniard smote them
 all !
 Darkly frowned the ancient Bhishma, wrathful Drona bit
 his tongue,
 Pale Vidura marked with anger insults on Draupadi flung
 Fulsome word nor foul dishonour could their truthful
 utterance taint,
 And they blamed Duryodhan's action when they heard
 Draupadi's plaint !

* * *

Madness seized the proud Duryodhan, and inflamed by
 passion base,
 Sought the prince to stain Draupadi with a dire and deep
 disgrace,
 On the proud and peerless woman cast his wicked, lustful
 eye,
 Sought to hold the high-born princess as a slave upon his
 knee !
 Bhima penned his wrath no longer, lightning-like his
 glance he flung,
 And the ancient hall of Kurus with his thunder accents rung :
 "May I never reach those mansions where my fathers live
 on high.
 May I never meet ancestors in the bright and happy sky,
 If that knee by which thou sinnest Bhima breaks not in
 his ire,
 In the battle's red arena with his weapon dread and dire !"

Red fire flamed on Bhima's forehead, sparkled from his
 angry eye,
 As from tough and gnarled branches quick the crackling
 red sparks fly !

A tumult was oviated, and the five brothers and Draupadi were spared further insults by the intervention of the blind old King Dhrita-rashtra. He restored to them their liberty, but they were banished to forests for twelve years, to be succeeded by a year of concealment. It was agreed that if they were discovered during this year of concealment they would have to undergo another twelve years of exile by the terms of the sentence.

The hard conditions were faithfully observed. The five brothers with Draupadi spent twelve years in forests and then passed one year in concealment as menial servants of Virata, king of the Matsyas. Arjun, who was so well known, had to disguise his sex and to hide himself in the women's apartments, teaching dancing and music to the females of the royal house. A year passed away thus.

Cattle-lifting was a favourite occupation with ancient Indian chiefs as with those of Homer, and it so happened that Duryodhan came on a cattle-lifting expedition to Matsya-land where the Pandav brothers were concealed. Arjun, a true warrior in his instincts, could not stand this. He issued forth from his concealment among the women of the house ; he recovered the cattle ; but he was discovered. But the year of concealment had expired, the discovery brought no penalty with it, and the five brothers, having faithfully observed the

conditions of exile, now boldly demanded their lost kingdom on the Jumna.

One of the most remarkable portions of this remarkable epic is the Council of War which was held by the five brothers and their many friends to determine on the course to be followed. Each chief rose and made a speech which is truly Homeric in fire and spirit, giving his views as to the plan which should be adopted to recover the lost kingdom.

At last the venerable king of the Panchalas, the father-in-law of Yudhisthir, rose and advocated that policy which has always been found to be the soundest foreign policy in ancient as in modern times. His advice was : "Endeavour to maintain the peace, but be prepared for war."

Priests and Brahmans were sent to Hastinapura in vain ; Duryodhan would not render back the old kingdom to his cousins, and at last Krishna, the wise and righteous peace-maker, went personally to the court of the Kurus to plead for peace before the sightless old monarch, the father of Duryodhan. There is something touching and sublime in this last eloquent appeal for peace on the eve of the most disastrous war of ancient times in India.

I will quote only a few lines from Krishna's long appeal :

KRISHNA'S SPEECH.

*Ponder yet, O ancient monarch ! Rulers of each distant
state,
Nations from the farthest reigns gather thick to court their
fate,

Father of a righteous nation ! save the princes of the land,
On the armed and fated nations stretch, old man, thy
healing hand !
Say the word, and at thy bidding leaders of each hostile
race,
Not the gory field of battle, but the festive board will
grace,
Robed in jewels, decked in garlands, they will quaff the
ruddy wine,
Greet their foes in mutual kindness, bless thy holy name
and thine !
Think, O man of many seasons ! when good Pandu left this
throne,
And his helpless loving orphans thou didst cherish as thine
own,
'Twas thy helping, steadying fingers taught their infant
steps to frame,
'Twas thy loving gentle accents taught their lips to lisp
each name.
As thine own they grew and blossomed, dear to thee they
yet remain,
Take them back unto thy bosom, be a father once again !
Take their love, O gracious monarch ! let thy closing days
be fair,
Let Duryodhan keep his kingdom, let the Pandavs have
their share !
Call to mind their noble suffering, for the tale is dark and
long,
Of the outrage they have suffered, of the insult and the
wrong !
Exiled into Varnavata, destined unto death by flame,
For the gods assist the righteous, they with added prowess
came !
Exiled unto Indra-prastha, by their toil and by their might,
They upreared a mighty empire and performed a glorious
rite !
Cheated of their realm and empire, and of all they called
their own,
In the jungle they have wandered, in concealment lived
unknown,
Once more quelling every evil, they are stout of heart and
hand,
Now redeem thy plighted promise, and restore their throne
and land !

*Trust me, mighty Dhrita-rashtra ! trust me, lords who grace
 this hall,
 Krishna pleads for peace and virtue, blessings unto one and
 all !
 Slaughter not the armed nations, slaughter not thy kith and kin,
 Mark not, king, they closing winters with the bloody stain of sin !
 Let thy sons and Pandu's children stand beside thy ancient
 throne,
 Cherish peace and cherish virtue, for thy days are almost done !"*

The ancient Bhishma, the warlike preceptor Drona, the wise Vidura, all advised peace. The father and mother of Duryodhan too pleaded for peace, but all in vain. Duryodhan was immoveable, and would not restore to his hated cousins their lost kingdom. His answer was plain and unmistakeable, and in keeping with his character.

DURYODHAN'S SPEECH.

"What great crime or darkening sorrow shadows o'er my bitter fate,
 That ye chiefs and Kuru's monarch mark Duryodhan for your hate ?
 Speak, what nameless guilt or folly, secret sin to me unknown,
 Turns from me your sweet affection, father's love that was my own ?
 If Yudhisthir, fond of gambling, played a heedless, reckless game,
 Lost his empire and his freedom, was it then Duryodhan's blame ?
 And if freed from shame and bondage in his folly played again,
 Lost again and went to exile, wherefore doth he now complain ?
 Weak are they in friends and forces, feeble is their fitful star,
 Wherefore then in pride and folly seek with us unequal war ?

Shall we, who to mighty INDRA scarce will do the homage
 due,
 Bow to homeless sons of Pandu and their comrades faint
 and few ?
 Bow to them while warlike Drona leads us as in days of old,
 Bhishma greater than the bright-gods, archer Karna true
 and bold ?
 If in dubious game of battle we should forfeit fame and
 life,
 Heaven will ope its golden portals for the warrior slain
 in strife !
 If unbending to our foemen we should press the gory
 plain,
 Stingless is the bed of arrows, death for us will have no
 pain !
 If in past in thoughtless folly once the realm was broke in
 twain,
 Kuru-land is reunited, never shall be split again !
Take my message to my kinsmen, for Duryodhan's words are
plain,
Portion of the Kuru empire sons of Pandu seek in vain ;
Town nor village, mart nor hamlet, help us righteous gods in
heaven,
Spot that needle's point can cover shall not unto them be
given !"

War, fatal war was the consequence, and into the
 many stirring incidents of the war, or rather the eighteen
 battles on eighteen successive days, I have not the time
 to enter. The unconquerable Bhishma led the Kuru forces
 for ten days and was then slain by an artifice ; the
 warrior priest, Drona, then led the troops for five days
 and was slain ; and at last the command of the Kuru
 army fell on Karna. He held his own for two days ; and
 the contest between the lifelong rivals Karna and Arjun
 is the crowning incident of the epic, like the contest
 between Hector and Achilles in the Iliad. Arjun and
 Karna were equal in prowess and skill, but Karna's

chariot-wheel sank in the earth ; he was thus taken at disadvantage, and killed on the seventeenth day of the war.

The last and eighteenth day dawned, and the preceptor Kripa still advised Duryodhan to render back the Jumna territory to Yudhisthir and to make peace with him. A melancholy interest attaches to this last appeal for peace, and to Duryodhan's last and almost sublime refusal to make peace on the eve of his death.

KRIPA'S LAST APPEAL AND DURYODHAN'S REPLY.

"Bid this battle cease, Duryodhan, pale and fitful is thy star,
 Blood enough of friendly nations soaks this crimson field of war !
 Bid them live, the few survivors of a vast and countless host,
 Let thy few remaining brothers live, for many are the lost !
 Kindly heart hath good Yudhisthir, still he seeks for right-ful peace,
 Render back his ancient kingdom, bid this war of kinsmen cease !"
 "Kripa," so Duryodhan answered, "in this sad and fatal strife,
 Ever foremost of our warriors, ever careless of thy life,
 Ever in the council chamber thou hast words of wisdom said,
 Needless war and dire destruction by thy peaceful council stayed,
 Every word thou speakest, Kripa, is a word of truth and weight,
 Nathless thy advice for concord, wise preceptor, comes too late !
 Hope not that the good Yudhisthir will again our friendship own,
 Cheated once by deep Sakuni of his kingdom and his throne,
 Rugged Bhima will not palter, fatal is the vow he made,
 Vengeful Arjun will not pardon gallant Abhimanyu dead !

Fair Draupadi doth her penance, so our ancient matrons say.
 In our blood to wash her insult and her proud insulters
 slay,
 Fair Subhadra morn and evening weeps her dear departed
 son,
 Feeds Draupadi's deathless anger for the hero dead and
 gone.
 Deeply in their bosoms rankle wrongs and insults we have
 given,
 Blood alone can wash it, Kripa, such the cruel will of
 Heaven !
 And the hour for peace is over, for our best sleep on the
 plain,
 Brothers, kinsmen, friends, and elders slumber with the
 countless slain.
 Shall Duryodhan like a recreant now avoid the deathful
 strife.
 After all his bravest warriors have in war surrendered life ?
 Shall he, sending them to slaughter, now survive and learn
 to flee,
 Shall he, ruler over monarchs, learn to bend the servile
 knee ?
 Proud Duryodhan sues no favour even with his dying
 breath,
 Unsubdued and still unconquered, changeless even unto
 death !
 Salya, valiant king of Madra, leads our armed hosts to-day,
 Or to perish or to conquer, gallant Kripa, lead the way ! "

I confess that passages like this, of which the great
 Indian epic is full, disclose to me that deep insight into
 human feelings, and that true portraiture of human
 character, which mark the greatest poets of all ages and
 among all nations. For, let it be remembered that
 Duryodhan is not a favourite of the Indian poet ; he
 has been depicted as cruel, vindictive, and faithless.
 But nevertheless a true poet does not pile on colour on
 his canvas like an unskilful painter ; there is a certain
 consistency and true delineation of human impulses in

all his characters. And Duryodhan, the wrong-doer and the faithless, almost commands our admiration on the eve of his death for the deep determination of his character—the unfaltering resolution of a great man, if not a good man.

The result of the day was fatal; the Kuru army was slaughtered, and Duryodhan at last ran from the field of battle and hid himself beside a lake, which is still pointed out to thousands of pilgrims in India who annually visit the scene of the battle.

DURYODHAN'S DEATH.

Far from battle's toil and slaughter, by a dark and limpid lake,
 Sad and slow and faint Duryodhan did his humble shelter take;
 But the valiant sons of Pandu, with the hunter's watchful care,
 Thither tracked their fallen foeman like a wild beast in its lair!
 "Gods be witness," said Duryodhan, flaming in his shame and wrath,
 "Boy to manhood ever hating we have crossed each other's path.
 Now we meet to part no longer, proud Duryodhan fights you all;
 Perish he, or sons of Pandu, may this evening see your fall!"
 Bhima answered: "For the insults long endured not forgiven,
 Me alone you fight, Duryodhan, witness righteous Gods in heaven!
 Call to mind the dark destruction planned of old in fiendish ire.
 In the halls of Varnavata to consume us in the fire!
 Call to mind the scheme deceitful, deep Sakuni's dark device,
 Cheating us of fame and empire by the trick of loaded dice!"

Call to mind that coward insult, and the outrage foul and
keen,
Flung on Drupad's saintly daughter and our noble spotless
queen !
Call to mind the stainless Bhishma, for thy sins and folly
slain,
Priest and proud preceptor Drona, Karna lifeless on the
plain !
Perish in thy sins, Duryodhan, perish, too, thy hated
name,
And thy dark life crime-polluted ends, Duryodhan, in thy
shame ! ”

Bhima and Duryodhan fought, and Bhima kept the terrible vow he had taken and broke Duryodhan's knee by his mace. A midnight slaughter in the camp of the Pandavs ended the war, and Duryodhan died in the early morning.

The real epic ends with the war, and with the funerals of the deceased warriors piously ordered by the victor Yudhisthir for friends and foes alike. Yudhisthir then ascended the throne of the Kuru kingdom, and performed the ancient and august ceremony of the Sacrifice of the Horse. Afterwards, placing a grandson of Arjun on the throne, the five brothers and Draupadi retired to the Himalayas.

This is what is known as the Great Journey. Draupadi drops down dead, then Yudhisthir's brothers one by one. Yudhisthir proceeds to heaven in person.

There he meets Krishna, now in his radiant heavenly form and he meets his brothers now Immortals in the sky. The god Indra then introduces him to his wife Draupadi, to the old monarch Dhrita-rashtra, to Karna, and to Arjun's son. Indra also introduces him to his

father, and to the venerable Bhishma and Drona, in these verses which are the last that I shall quote.

IMMORTAL LIFE.

"This, Yudhisthir, is thy father by thy mother joined in heaven,
 Oft he comes into my mansions in his flowery chariot driven,
 This is Bhishma, stainless warrior, by the *Vasus* is his place,
 By the God of heavenly wisdom teacher Drona sits in grace !
*These and other mighty warriors, in the earthly battle slain,
 By their valour and their virtue walk the bright ethereal plain !
 They have cast their mortal bodies, crossed the radiant gate of heaven,
 For to win celestial mansions unto mortals it is given ?
 Let them strive by kindly action, gentle speech, endurance long,
 Brighter life and holier future unto sons of men belong !*"

'This is the briefest outline of the leading story of the great epic of India, venerated in ancient times, venerated to the present day. The Hindu scarcely lives, as I have said elsewhere, man or woman, high or low, educated or ignorant, whose earliest recollections do not cling round the story of this ancient epic. The humble manufacturer and artisan of Bengal still spells out some modern translation of this undying tale. The tall peasantry of the North-West and the Punjab know of the five Pandav brothers and the righteous Krishna. The people of Bombay and of Madras cherish with equal ardour this sacred tale. Mothers in India know no better theme for imparting instruction to their daughters than this deathless tale. Elderly men know

no richer work for narrating stories to children than this great epic with its endless episodes. The *Maha-Bharata*, together with the other epic, the *Ramayana*, is more truly the national property of the Hindus than is Homer in Greece, Dante in Italy, or Shakespeare in England. No work except the Bible has such influence in forming the character of men in Christian lands as the ancient epics in India. They have been our cherished heritage for three thousand years, they are the intellectual food of a nation of two hundred millions to this day. And unless I am very much mistaken in my estimate, the Indian epics, when they are better known in Europe, shall take their rank, along with Homer and Dante and Shakespeare, as undying works of art, left for all times, for all countries, and for all mankind.

XIII. RAMAYANA, THE ODYSSEY OF INDIA.

[*Paper read before the Royal Society of Literature,
London, on October 24, 1900, Lord Halsbury,
Lord Chancellor, presiding.*]

It is little over a year ago that I had the privilege of reading in these rooms a paper on the *Mahabharata*, the Iliad of Ancient India. It gives me great pleasure to appear before you again to-night, and to read a short paper on the *Ramayana*, which may not be inappropriately described as the Odyssey of Ancient India. These two great epics, the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana*, comprise the whole of the epic literature of ancient India, and therefore stand apart from all the other literary productions of that country, rich and fertile as that country has always been in the highest results in every department of literature, poetry, and science.

This learned Society, while it very properly devotes the greater portion of its time to the literature and thought of England, has nevertheless encouraged researches into the literatures of other lands and of other times and has from time to time endeavoured to interest Englishmen in all that is best and truest in the world's literary achievements. All that interests the cultured mind in the productions of various ages and various nations has occasionally been the subject of papers which have been read within these rooms. The works of Dante and of Moliere and of Goethe are as familiar to many members

of this Society as the works of Chaucer and of Shakespeare; and the works of the ancients have not unfrequently formed the subjects of discussion in this hall. I rejoice, therefore, that this Society occasionally turns its attention to the rich literature of India; and as a Fellow of this Society I consider it a proud privilege to have placed before this Society, and before English readers generally, a condensed metrical translation of the two vast Indian epics.

There are special reasons why Englishmen should feel a living interest in India's ancient literature. The beauty of ancient thought, and graphic pictures of ancient life, must always appeal to modern nations of all countries. But more than this, Great Britain and her colonies and India form to-day one great empire—the greatest that the world has yet seen. It is necessary that there should be not only community of interests, but community of thought and feeling within this great empire. And it is necessary that Englishmen should appreciate Indian thought and culture as we in India appreciate English thought. For, believe me, your greatest authors, your noblest poets, your boldest philosophers, are not more closely studied in Oxford and in Cambridge, in Edinburgh, and in London, than they are studied and appreciated in Calcutta and in Bombay. Shakespeare's matchless creations are a living world to thousands of Indian students; Milton and Wordsworth and Tennyson are studied with reverent admiration in India; the great Walter Scott fascinates, and the inimitable Charles Dickens amuses, ten thousands of Hindu and Musalman

boys ! Young India appreciates English thought and literature ; it is necessary that Englishmen and Englishwomen should understand ancient Indian thought, which permeates modern Indian life and institutions to a far greater extent than we generally imagine. The great past is not dead and buried in India ; past traditions, past institutions, even ancient poetry and romance, are a living reality in India of the present day, in India not of the educated and cultured few, but of the millions of agriculturists and labourers who till her grateful soil, people her shady villages, and know more of Krishna and Rama than they know of all the heroes of the modern world. To be in touch with the people of modern India you must know her ancient traditions ; to ignore her ancient thoughts is to isolate yourselves from modern India.

There are learned translations of oriental literature prepared by generations of devoted scholars, and which appeal mainly to scholars. It is necessary that the average reader and the busy man of work should have before him more handy and readable and attractive works, reproducing, as far as possible, the spirit, and the beauty, and the true significance of Indian poetry and Indian thought. This work has not yet been done. There is an undiscovered world for Englishmen still to explore, an undiscovered mine for literary miners to work upon ; and I can assure you that the labour will not be thrown away, and Englishmen, even with a splendid literature of their own, will be all the richer when they possess themselves of Indian thought and

literature. And the world will be richer in its wealth of ideas, when all that is beautiful and true in eastern culture is added to all that is fresh and vigorous in modern European thought.

India has a long, and a not inglorious, ancient history. It may be two thousand years before Christ that the ancestors of the present Aryan Hindu nation were settled on the banks of the Indus, conquering the Punjab from the aboriginal inhabitants of the soil, extending cultivation and the arts of peace, and invoking the "bright gods" of Nature in beautiful hymns which have been still left to us in that collection known as the *Rig Veda*, which is the oldest literary work now extant among the Aryan nations of the earth. For several centuries the Aryan conquerors were confined to the Punjab ; their numerous petty states and kingdoms, their wars against aborigines, and their arts of peace, were all confined to that land of five rivers, or rather the land of seven rivers as it was then called ; and the rest of India which lay beyond was almost unknown to them. This long period of the Aryan settlements in the Punjab is generally known as the Vedic Age ; so called from the Veda to which allusion has been already made. But I do not propose to-night to speak of this first and earliest period of Indian history.

It was in the subsequent age that the Aryan Hindus, issuing from the Punjab, spread over the whole of Northern India, and founded powerful kingdoms on the banks of the Ganges and the Jumna. It is this second period of ancient Indian history which is known as the

Epic Age, because the two epics of India described the kingdoms and the nations which flourished in Northern India during this age. It is of this second age of Indian history, this Epic Age as it is generally called, extending from the fifteenth to the tenth century B.C., that I propose to speak to-night.

Among the many powerful nations which flourished in Northern India in this age, the Bharatas and the Panchalas were the most celebrated in the west, and the Kosalas and the Videhas were the most celebrated in the east. The Bharatas and the Panchalas lived along the upper course of the Ganges, *i. e.* in the country between modern Delhi and Kanouj: and the Kosalas and the Videhas lived further to the east, *i. e.* in those provinces which we now know as Oudh and North Behar. The deeds or legends of the western tribes, the Bharatas and the Panchalas, are described in the great epic known as the *Mahabharata*; while the deeds or legends of the eastern tribes, the Kosalas and the Videhas, are described in the other great epic known as the *Ramayana*. The *Mahabharata* may, therefore, be described as the epic of the Western Aryans; the *Ramayana* as the epic of the Eastern Aryans.

But this is not the only distinction between the two epics. The nations of North-western India have generally been known for their sturdy and warlike virtues; while those of North-eastern India have been known for their peacefulness and their culture; and this distinction pervades the two epics. The characters of the *Mahabharata* are men of flesh and blood, with true

virtues and crimes of great actors in the historic world ; the characters of the *Ramayana* are more often ideals of manly devotion to truth and of womanly faithfulness and love. The poet of the *Mahabharata* describes the supposed incidents of a real and sanguinary war with all its lofty heroism and chivalry ; the poet of the *Ramayana* hands down the memories of a golden age with all its ideals of piety and faith and domestic love. As a heroic poem the *Mahabharata* stands on a higher level ; as a religious poem, delineating the softer emotions of our everyday life, the *Ramayana* sends its roots deeper into the Hindu mind.

These remarks will be best illustrated if I narrate to you briefly the story of the *Ramayana*, as I narrated to you the story of the *Mahabharata* last year. I may remark, in passing, that the *Mahabharata* in Sanscrit consists of more than 90,000 verses, and that the *Ramayana* consists of more than 24,000 verses. In condensing these vast epics I have not attempted to tell the story in my own language ; but I have selected those portions of the original which tell the leading incidents, and have translated them in full ; and I have connected these selected passages by short notes so as to place the complete story before the reader. The plan has this advantage, that the main story of the epics is told, not by the translator in his own way, but by the poet himself ; the passages placed before the reader are not the translator's abridgements of long poems, but are passages from the original poems. It is the ancient poets of India, and not the translator, who narrate the

ancient story; but they narrate only the leading incidents of the story, so as to limit the poems within a reasonable compass. I may add that the *Ramayana*, like the *Mahabharata*, is a growth of ages; generations of later Indian poets adding their quota of verses through long centuries to the poem as it originally stood. It is possible, therefore, that in limiting my translation to those passages which describe the leading incidents, I have presented the great poem somewhat in the form in which it originally stood, and in which it was first recited in the Courts of Northern India. And I have generally translated each Sanscrit verse into a corresponding English verse, following the Sanscrit metre in English as far as was possible. I may be pardoned for making these few remarks about my own work; it was necessary to do so, as I shall have to quote pretty often from my own translation. And here I should also make some mention of my great predecessors in this work—of Gorresio, who completed an Italian translation of the *Ramayana* in 1867; of Hippolyte Fauche, who completed a French translation of the epic shortly after; and of Ralph Griffith, who has given us an almost complete rendering of it in six octavo volumes of English verse.

With these preliminary remarks, I will now turn to the story of the epic itself. The *Ramayana* virtually commences with a description of the kingdom of Ayodhya or Oudh, then ruled by the ancient monarch Dasa-ratha. In this description we have at once the ideal of an ancient Hindu king and of an ancient Hindu

people ; and the passage is important as depicting the Hindu conception of a golden age. I will therefore read a few verses.

Like the ancient monarch Manu, father of the human race,
 Dasa-ratha ruled his people with a father's loving grace,
 Truth and justice swayed each action and each baser motive
 quelled,
 People's Love and Monarch's Duty every thought and deed
 impelled,
 And his town like INDRA's city—tower and dome and turret
 brave—
 Rose in proud and peerless beauty on Sarayu's limpid wave !
 Peaceful lived the righteous people, rich in wealth, in merit
 high,
 Envy dwelt not in their bosoms, and their accents shaped
 no lie.
 Fathers, with their happy households, owned their cattle,
 corn, and gold ;
 Galling penury and famine in Ayodhya had no hold.
 Neighbours lived in mutual kindness, helpful with their
 ample wealth ;
 None who begged the wasted refuse, none who lived by
 fraud and stealth !
 And they wore the gem and earring, wreath and fragrant
 sandal paste,
 And their arms were decked with bracelets, and their necks
 with *nishkas* graced ;
 Cheat and braggart and deceiver lived not in the ancient
 town ;
 Proud despiser of the lowly wore no insults in their frown ;
 Poorer fed not on the richer, hireling friend upon the great,
 None with low and lying accents did upon the proud man
 wait !
 Men to plighted vows were faithful, faithful was each loving
 wife ;
 Impure thought and wandering fancy stained not holy wedded
 life.
 Robed in gold and graceful garments, fair in form and fair
 in face,
 Winsome were Ayodhya's daughters, rich in wit and woman's
 grace !

Like other monarchs of the East, Dasa-ratha rejoiced in a large household, and in the company of many queens, and three of these queens were the foremost in rank, and shared among them the affections of their lord. Kausalya, the eldest queen, was the mother of Rama, the hero of the epic. Kaikeyi, a young and beautiful and imperious queen, was the mother of Bharat. Sumitra, the third queen, gave birth to twins, one of whom, Lakhsman, became the faithful and devoted follower of his elder brother Rama. The names of these two loving brothers, Rama and Lakshman, are to this day household words in every Hindu home.

So far we have confined ourselves to the story of the royal family of Oudh ; let us now turn to the adjoining kingdom of Videha or North Behar. That ancient kingdom was ruled by a pious and learned king, Janaka ; and Janaka had a lovely daughter, Sita, the heroine of the epic. Suitors from distant lands came for the hand of Sita, for Janaka, like the warriors of olden times, had declared—

“He shall win my peerless Sita who shall bend my bow of war !”

That bow was a god-given weapon, tremendous in its size and weight ; and many princes who came to seek the hand of Sita failed to bend the bow, and went back humbled and disappointed. Rama and his faithful brother Lakshman came wandering from their own kingdom to the kingdom of Janaka, and the mighty weapon was produced before Rama, so that he, too, might try his strength and skill.

Wond'ring gazed the kings assembled as the son of Raghu's
 race,
 Proudly raised the mighty weapon with a warrior's stately
 grace,
 Proudly strung the bow of Rudra which the kings had tried
 in vain,
 Drew the cord with force resistless till the weapon snapped
 in twain !

The astonished and gratified monarch of Videha kept his promise ; the lovely Sita was wedded to Rama ; and the proud and victorious prince returned with his bride to his own land amidst the blessings of Brahmans and the acclamations of the people.

Years passed away and Rama grew in grace and learning and valour ; and, according to an ancient Indian custom, his old father desired to place on him the burden of the kingdom, and to pass his few remaining years in religious rites and pious meditation. The old king's increasing feebleness, and Rama's growing worth and abilities, alike pointed to this course as the most expedient and in the poet's description of Rama's virtues we see once more a Hindu's ideal of a model prince, bold in war, rich in learning, loving and bounteous towards his people.

For his Rama strong and stately was his eldest and his best,
 Void of every baser passion and with every virtue blest,
 Soft in speech, sedate and peaceful, seeking still the holy path,
 Calm in conscious worth and valour, taunt nor cavil waked
 his wrath,
 In the field of war excelling, boldest warrior 'midst the bold,
 In the palace chambers listening to the tales by elders told,
 Faithful to the wise and learned, truthful in his deed and
 word,
 Rama dearly loved his people and his people loved their lord !

To the Brahmans pure and holy Rama due obeisance made,
 To the poor and to the helpless deeper love and honour
 paid,
 Spirit of his race and nation was to high-souled Rama given,
 Thoughts that widen human glory, deeds that ope the gates
 of heaven !
 Taught by sages and by elders in the manner of his race,
 Rama grew in social virtues and each soft endearing grace,
 Taught by inborn pride and wisdom patient purpose to
 conceal,
 Deep determined was his effort, dauntless was his silent will !
 Peerless in his skill and valour steed and elephant to tame,
 Dauntless leader of his forces, matchless in his warlike fame,
 Higher thought and nobler duty did the righteous Rama
 move,
 By his toil and by his virtues still he sought his people's love !

Dasa-ratha convened a great council, one of those
 great assemblages which were summoned by the Hindu
 kings of ancient India when great questions of State were
 under consideration. I will not give that council the
 modern name of a Parliament ; but it is a fact that not
 only the chiefs and peers of the realm, but also repre-
 sentative burghers were invited from the towns and
 villages of Oudh to advise their king. And Dasa-ratha
 spake to them :

"Known to all, the race of Raghu rules this empire broad
 and fair,
 And hath ever loved and cherished subjects with a father's
 care,
 In my father's footsteps treading I have sought the ancient
 path,
 Nursed my people as my children, free from passion, pride
 and wrath,
 Underneath this white umbrella, seated on this royal throne,
 I have toiled to win their welfare and my task is almost done !

Years have passed of fruitful labour, years of work by fortune
blest,
And the evening of my life-time needs, my friends, the even-
ing's rest.
Years have passed in watchful effort, Law and Duty to
uphold,
Effort needing strength and prowess—and my feeble limbs
are old !
Peers and burghers, let your monarch, now his lifelong
labour done,
For the weal of loving subjects on his empire seat his son,
Speak your thought and from this bosom lift a load of toil
and care,
On the proud throne of my fathers let me place a peerless
heir ;
Speak your thought, my chiefs and people, if this purpose
please you well,
Or if wiser, better counsel in your wisdom ye can tell,
Speak your thought without compulsion, though this plan
to me be dear,
If some middle course were wiser, if some other way were
clear !”

It is needless to state that the people, by whom their prince was dearly loved, approved of their old king's suggestion, and gave their consent by acclamation ; and preparations were made to decorate the city of Ayodhya or Oudh in a manner suitable to the occasion. As we read the account of these decorations we realise how much of the life and manners of ancient India survives to the present day in modern India ; and every Englishman who has passed year of his life in India will realise in the following verses, written thousands of years ago, a not unfaithful description of the way in which towns and marts are decorated in India in these days, to evince the loyalty of a grateful people to those rulers whom they love to honour.

Rama shall be Heir and Regent, Rama shall be crowned
 to-day—
 Rapid flew the gladdening message with the morning's
 gladsome ray,
 And the people of the city, maid and matron, man and
 boy,
 Decorated fair Avodhya in their wild tumultuous joy !
 On the temple's lofty steeple high as cloud above the air.
 On the crossing of the pathways, in the garden green
 and fair,
 On the merchant's ample warehouse, on the shop with
 stores displayed,
 On the mansion of the noble by the cunning artist made,
 On the gay and bright pavilion, on the high and shady
 trees,
 Banners rose and glittering streamers, flags that fluttered
 in the breeze !
 Actors gay and nimble dancers, singers skilled in lightsonic
 song,
 With their antics and their music pleased the gay and
 gathered throng.
 And the people met in conclaves, spake of Rama, Regent
 Heir,
 And the children by the roadside lisped of Sita, sweet and
 fair !
 Women wove the scented garland, merry maids the
 censor lit,
 Men with broom and sprinkled water swept the spacious
 mart and street,
 Rows of trees and posts they planted hung with lamps for
 coming night,
 That the midnight dark might rival splendour of the noon-
 day light !
 Troops of men and merry children laboured with a loving
 care,
 Woman's skill and woman's fancy made the city passing
 fair,
 So that good and kindly Rama might his people's toil
 approve,
 So that sweet and soft-eyed Sita might accept her people's
 love !

But while these preparations were made for Rama's
 coronation as Prince Regent, dark scheme was on foot

in the palace. Among the three queens of the palace, Kausalya, the mother of Rama, rejoiced at the prospect of her son's coronation. Kaikeyi, the mother of Bharat, too, looked forward to it with pleasure, until ambition and jealousy were roused in her heart by an old nurse of the family ; and this portion of the Epic has always struck me as one of the most powerful in the whole poem. The greatest of English poets conjures up three strange witches to stir up in the soul of Macbeth the first flames of a restless ambition which leads him to deeds of crime and violence ; and the poet also gives him a fitting helpmate to speed his flagging purpose and stifle his scruples. With no less dramatic force and true insight into human character, the poet of the *Ramayana* brings on the stage the figure of a crooked-formed and crooked-minded old nurse, who stirs in the mother of Bharat the flames of ambition and of jealousy. She speaks with terrible effect to Bharat's mother when she urges :

"Trust me, queen, thy Bharat's merits are too well and
widely known,
And he stands too near and closely by a rival brother's
throne :
Rama hath a wolf-like wisdom and a fang to reach the
foe,
And I tremble for thy Bharat, Heaven avert untimely
woe !
Happy is the Queen Kausalya, they will soon anoint her
son,
When on Pushya's constellation gaily rides to-morrow's
moon :
Happy is the Queen Kausalya in her regal pomp and
state,
And Kaikeyi like a bond-slave must upon her rival wait !

Wilt thou do her due obeisance as we humble women do?
 Will thy proud and princely Bharat as his brother's hench-
 man go,
 Will thy Bharat's gentle consort, fairest princess in this
 land,
 In her tears and in her anguish wait on Sita's proud
 command?

For a time the Queen Kaikeyi repels these insinua-
 tions and answers :

"What inspires thee, wicked woman, thus to rail in bitter
 tone,
 Shall not Rama, best and eldest, fill his father's royal
 throne?
 What alarms thee, crooked woman, in the happy rites
 begun,
 Shall not Rama guard his brothers as a father guards his
 son?

But the old nurse is importunate. She urges again
 and again :

"Thou hast borne the princely Bharat, nursed him from
 thy gentle breast,
 To a queen and to a mother need a prince's claims be
 pressed?
 To a thoughtless, heedless mother must Bharat's virtues
 plead?
 Must the Queen Kaikeyi witness Queen Kausalya's son
 succeed?
 Trust thy old and faithful woman who hath nursed thee,
 youthful queen,
 And in great and princely houses many darksome deeds
 has seen;
 Trust my word, the wily Rama for his spacious empire's
 good,
 Soon will banish friendless Bharat and secure his peace
 with blood!
 Speak thy mandate to thy husband, win thy son a happy
 fate,
 Doom him not to Rama's service or his unrelenting hate;

Let not Rama in his rancour shed a younger brother's
blood,
As the lion slays the tiger in the deep and echoing wood !
With the magic of thy beauty thou hast won thy monarch's
heart,
Queen Kausalya's bosom rankles with a woman's secret
smart ;
Let her not with woman's vengeance turn upon her prouder
foe,
And as crowned Rama's mother venge her sorrows in thy
woe.
Mark my word, my child Kaikeyi, much these ancient eyes
have seen.
Rama's rule is death to Bharat insult to my honoured
queen ! ”
Like a slow but deadly poison worked the ancient nurse's
tears,
And a wife's undying impulse mingled with a mother's
fears ;
Deep within Kaikeyi's bosom worked a woman's jealous
thought,
Speechless in her silent anger mourner's dark retreat she
sought.

The scene which follows is tragic. The old king sought out his beautiful and imperious queen in the mourner's chamber, implored her to state her wishes, and promised with many solemn vows to fulfil them. And then, when the queen disclosed her dark purpose, that her son Bharat should be crowned, and that Rama should be banished to the woods, the feeble old king was stunned and speechless.

It is needless to add that the young wife had her own way, and the dark deed was done. Rama was sentenced to banishment, and heroic in his obedience and duty as he was heroic in feats of arms, Rama left his kingdom and his home without a word of protest.

But the banishment of Rama was the death of his old father. He never recovered from the blow, never forgot the wrong he had done to the best of sons and the best of men. For six days he suffered from the agony of grief and repentance; and, like a pious Hindu, he attributed this suffering to his own misdeeds in past years. Lying on his death-bed he narrated to the mother of Rama the story of his youth: how he had gone to hunt in a forest, how he had killed a hermit's son, how the old and sightless hermit had cursed him for that deed.

"Years have gone and many seasons, and in fulness of the
time
Comes the fruit of pride and folly and the harvest of my
crime.
Rama, eldest born and dearest, Lakshman true and faithful
son,
Ah! forgive a dying father and a cruel action done!
Lay thy hands in mine, Kausalya; wipe thy unavailing
tear,
Speak a wife's consoling accents to a dying husband's
ear.
Lay thy hands on mine, Sumitra, vision fails my closing
eyes,
And for brave and banished Rama wings my spirit to the
skies!"

The midnight slowly passed away, and the ancient king died on the seventh morning from that of his son's banishment.

Meanwhile, Rama had not departed to the woods alone. He was followed by his wife Sita; and here the character of Sita—the Hindu ideal of a woman's devotion, faithfulness, and love—comes prominently

before the reader. It may be stated without exaggeration that no creation of the human imagination—no character in the literature of ancient Greece or ancient Rome or of modern Europe—has ever had such a hold on the mind of any nation, as the matchless character of Sita among the millions of India. Her womanly love and faithfulness, her unfaltering truth and devotion, her steadfast virtue in trials and temptations—all this is not merely a literary tradition among the learned in India, but a priceless and undying heritage among the millions. There is not a Hindu woman living in that vast continent whose earliest memories of childhood do not cling around the story of the saintly Sita repeated in every Hindu nursery; whose moral education through life is not dominated by the conception of that pure and spotless woman, and whose last yearnings after righteousness in old age are not inspired and strengthened by the lofty example of that almost divine character.

Rama, banished to the woods for fourteen years, implored Sita to stay behind until his return from banishment, but Sita repelled the idea with woman's pride and a wife's devotion.

“For my mother often taught me and my father often
spake,
That her home the wedded woman doth beside her husband
make,
As the shadow to the substance, to her lord is faithful
wife,
And she parts not from her consort till she parts with
fleeing life !

Therefore bid me seek the jungle and in pathless forests
 roam,
 Where the wild deer freely ranges and the tiger makes
 his home,
 Happier than in father's mansions in the woods will Sita
 rove,
 Waste no thought on home or kindred, nestling in her
 husband's love !
 World-renowned is Rama's valour, fearless by her Rama's
 side,
 Sita still will live and wander with a faithful woman's
 pride,
 And the wild fruit she will gather from the fresh and fragrant
 wood,
 And the food by Rama tasted shall be Sita's cherished food !
 Bid me seek the sylvan greenwoods, wooded hills and
 plateaus high,
 Limpid rills and crystal *nullas* as they softly ripple by,
 And where in the lake of lotus tuneful birds their plumage
 lave,
 Let me with my loving Rama skim the cool translucent
 wave !
 Years will pass in happy union—happiest lot to woman
 given—
 Sita seeks not throne or empire, nor the brighter joys of
 heaven,
 Heaven conceals not brighter mansions in its sunny fields
 of pride,
 Where without her lord and husband faithful Sita would
 reside !
 Therefore let me seek the jungle where the jungle-rangers
 rove,
 Dearer than the royal palace, where I share my husband's
 love,
 And my heart in sweet communion shall my Rama's wishes
 share,
 And my wisely toil shall lighten Rama's load of woe and
 care !"
 Vainly gentle Rama pleaded dangers of the jungle life,
 Vainly spake of toil and trial to a true and tender wife !

Lakshman too followed his elder brother to the
 woods. They left the town of Ayodhya amidst "the

lamentations of the people ; they stole away at night, and crossed the Tamasa river to avoid the crowds of people who followed them, and they crossed first the Ganges and then the Jumna on their way to the south. The wanderings of exiled Rama through various unknown tracts, which fill a large part of the Epic, remind the reader of the wanderings of Ulysses for many a long year : but the Indian story has a far greater hold on the national mind than the story of the ancient Greeks. The illiterate modern Greeks will be at a loss to narrate the story of their hero's wanderings ; but in India, thousands upon thousands of the ignorant and the illiterate make annual pilgrimages along the path which Rama and Sita and Lakshman are supposed to have traversed, thirty centuries ago. The past is not dead or buried in India, it is a living faith and a reality among the millions.

In the meanwhile, while Bharat's mother had succeeded in securing the throne for her son, Bharat himself would not accept it at the price of the banishment of his elder. He left Ayodhya in quest of Rama, crossed the Ganges and the Jumna, found out Rama in the hermitage where he was living as an anchorite, and implored him to return. But Rama's reply was worthy of him, he had received a mandate from his father, and would not violate it.

Among the many discussions which took place in this hermitage, the most remarkable are the arguments of an Indian sceptic, named Jabali. In ancient India, as in ancient Greece, various schools of philosophy

flourished side by side, some of them orthodox and some of them exceedingly heterodox and even atheistic, and the greatest latitude of free thought was tolerated. Jabali was a freethinker of the broadest type, denying God, and ridiculing ideas of duty and of a future life : and he pressed Rama to return to his kingdom in words which would stagger even a modern sceptic. He said :

“Wherefore, Rama, idle maxims cloud thy heart and warp
thy mind,
Maxims which mislead the simple and the thoughtless
human kind ?
Love nor friendship doth a mortal to his kith or kindred
own,
Entering on this wide earth friendless, and departing all
alone,
Foolishly upon the father and mother dotes the son,
Kinship as an idle fancy—save thyself thy kith is none !
In this wayside inn he halteth, who in distant lands doth
roam,
Leaves it with the dawning daylight for another transient
home.
Thus on earth are kith and kindred, home and country,
wealth and store ;
We but meet them on our journey, leave them as we
pass before !
Ah ! I weep for erring mortals, who on erring duty bent
Sacrifice their dear enjoyment till their barren life is
spent ;
Who to Gods and to the Fathers vainly still their offering
make ;
Waste of food ! for God nor father doth our pious offering
take !
Crafty priests have forged these maxims, and with selfish
objects say—
Make thy gifts and do thy penance, leave thy worldly wealth
and pray !
There is no Hereafter, Rama, vain the hope and creed of
men ;
Seek the pleasure of the present, spurn illusions poor and
vain.

Take the course of sense and wisdom, cast all idle faith
aside,
Take the kingdom Bharat offers, rule Ayodhya in thy
pride !"

But the sophistry of the philosopher had no more
influence with Rama than the affectionate pleadings of
his brother : and he replied to the philosopher's reason-
ing in words which gave us an insight into the lofty
determination of the great hero of the epic.

"Sweep aside thy crafty reasoning, Truth is still our ancient
way ;
Truth sustains the earth and nations and a monarch's
righteous sway.
Mighty Gods and holy sages find in Truth their haven
shore,
Scorning death and dark destruction, Truth survives for
evermore !
Deadlier than the serpent's venom is the venom of a lie,
From the false, than from the cobra, men with deeper
terror fly ;
Dearer than the food to mortals, Truth as nourishment is
given ;
Truth sustains the wide creation, Truth upholds the highest
heaven !
Vain were gifts and sacrifices, rigid penances were vain
Profitless the holy *Vedas* but for truth which they
sustain ;
Gifts and rights and rigid penance have no aim or purpose
high,
Save in Truth, which rules the wide earth and the regions
of the sky !
I have plighted truth and promise, and my word may
not unsay,
Fourteen years in pathless forests father's mandate I
obey ;
And I seek no spacious reasons my relinquished throne to
win,
Gods nor Fathers nor the *Vedas* counsel tortuous paths
of sin !

Pardon, *rishi*, still unchanging shall remain my promise given
 To thy mother Queen Kaikeyi, to my father now in heaven.
 Pardon, *rishi*, still in jungle we shall seek the forest fare,
 Worship Gods who watch our actions, and pervade the earth
 and air ;

*And the deep and darksome jungle shall be Rama's royal hall,
 For a righteous father's mandate dutious son may not recall !*

Failing in his endeavour to induce Rama to return, the younger Bharat returned to Ayodhya ; while Rama penetrated into the deeper jungles of the south to avoid fresh solicitations from his friends and relations. Accompanied by his wife and Lakshman, he travelled to the south of the Vindhya mountains, and at last chose his retreat near the sources of the Godavari river, at a place now called Nassik, not far from modern Bombay. Here the faithful Lakshman built a humble leafy cottage, thatched with reeds and jungle grass, and here Rama and his wife passed some of the happiest years of their life in the lone retreat of what was then an interminable wilderness.

The poem takes a new turn now ; and we exchange the quiet life of a righteous exile in holy hermitages for the more stirring incidents of war. Ravan was the powerful and terrible king of Ceylon, and Ravan's sister, wandering the wilderness, met Rama and fell in love with him. The too forward maiden was punished by the angry Lakshman, and she went and complained to her royal brother, the king of Ceylon. Ravan meditated a deep revenge, and he lured away Rama and Lakshman from their humble cottage in order to fall on unprotected Sita.

This was the great crisis of Sita's life, when Ravan, disguised as a hermit, approached her lone and unprotected cottage, and the poet describes the critical moment in befitting verse.

Sita, in the simplicity of her heart, still believed the intruder to be a hermit and a guest, offered him the welcome due to a religious man, and narrated to him in her simple and pathetic language the story of her life, and of her husband's banishment into the woods. The scene is dramatic in the highest degree, and the simple tale told by the trustful Sita of her joys and her sorrows to the cruel and crime-polluted Ravan darkly determined on her destruction, is one of the most touching passages in the whole epic.

Ravan at last disclosed himself. And he proposed to Sita that she should leave the homeless Rama, and henceforth be his queen, and the proud Empress of Ceylon. It was then that Sita discovered the terrible nature of her situation; and her natural gentleness and sweetness gave way to the noble wrath of an insulted woman. And she repelled Ravan's proposal with the scorn and indignation of a true wife, proud of her war-like lord. And she said to Ravan :

"Sure thy fitful life is shadowed by dark and dreadful fate,
 Since in frenzy of thy passion court'st thou a warrior's mate,
 Tear the tooth of hungry lion while upon the calf he feeds,
 Touch the fang of deadly cobra while his dying victim
 bleeds,
 Aye, uproot the solid mountain from its base of rocky
 land,
 Ere thou win the wife of Rama, stout of heart and strong of
 hand !

Pierce thy eye with point of needle till it racks thy tortured head,
Press thy red tongue cleft and bleeding on the razor's shining blade,
Hurl thyself upon the ocean from a towering peak and high,
Snatch the orbs of day and midnight from their spheres in azure sky,
Tongues of flaming conflagration in thy flowing dress enfold,
Ere thou take the wife of Rama to thy distant dungeon hold,
Ere thou seek to insult Rama unrelenting in his wrath,
O'er a bed of pikes of iron tread a softer, easier path! "

But all her threats and protests and entreaties were in vain, the cruel and relentless Ravan seized the unprotected woman, forced her into his chariot, and took her away to Ceylon. The helpless Sita, writhing in agony like a snake in the talons of an eagle, vainly called for the help of Rama and of Laksman, who were far away in the woods ; she invoked the spirits of the woodlands and of the earth and air ; and she doomed Ravan to destruction in words of terrible import and truth.

The account of the invasion of Ceylon by Rama, and of the war which followed, need not detain us long. The aboriginal dwellers of Southern India who helped Rama in this invasion are described by the poet as monkeys and bears ; and the defenders of Ceylon are described as monsters ; and the incidents of the war, though often spirited and stirring, lack the human interest of the war of the *Mahabharata*. As a heroic poem, the *Ramayana* cannot be compared with the *Mahabharata* ; we miss in the *Ramayana* those stirring descriptions of real battles, and the encounters of real warriors, which strike us so forcibly in the *Mahabharata*. Lakshman the brother

of Rama is, however, a truly fine soldier-like character ; he kills the terrible son of Ravan in fair fight ; and then Rama himself kills Ravan and recovers the stolen Sita.

That saintly woman, who had remained faithful to her wedded lord in all her trials and sorrows, proves her purity by an ordeal of fire, and returns to the embraces of her victorious lord, and they both return to Ayodhya with Lakhsman, the period of exile being now over.

In a fine passage the poet describes the victorious brothers and Sita, sailing over the whole continent of India in an aerial car, crossing over the mighty hills, the majestic rivers, the far-extending woods, and the towns and hamlets and smiling fields which lay beneath them spread out like a map. And when the car performed this marvellous journey from Ceylon to Oudh, the city of Oudh once more decorated herself to her returning lord and monarch.

Bharat rendered back the kingdom of Oudh to Rama, and Rama and Sita were consecrated as king and queen of a happy and joyous nation. And to this day the traditions of the people of India represent the reign of Rama as a period of felicity and happiness when

*Trees their ample produce yielded as returning seasons went,
And the earth in grateful gladness never failing harvest lent,
Rains descended in their season, never came the blighting gale,
Rich in crop and rich in pasture was each soft and smiling vale,
Loam and anvil gave their produce and the tilled and fertile
soil,*

And the nation lived rejoicing in their old ancestral toil !

The real epic of Rama ends here. There is an *Uttara Kanda*, or supplement, which prolongs the story,

and gives it a sad and mournful ending ; but it is unnecessary to go into that supplemental story to-night. Enough has been said to explain the character of this wonderful ancient poem of the Hindus, embodying the highest ideals of manly devotion to truth and womanly faithfulness and love.

One word more, and I have done. I have remarked elsewhere that in India the *Ramayana* is not merely an ancient epic, but is still a living tradition and a living faith. It forms the basis of the moral instruction of a nation, and it is a part of the lives of two hundred millions of people. It is necessary to add that when the modern languages of India were first formed out of the ancient Sanscrit and Prakrits, in the ninth and tenth centuries after Christ, the *Ramayana* had the greatest influence in inspiring our modern poets and forming our modern tongues. Southern India took the lead, and a translation of the *Ramayana* in the Tamil language appeared as early as 1100 A.D. Northern India and Bengal and Bombay followed the example ; Tulasi Das's *Ramayana* is the great classic of the Hindi language, Krittibas's *Ramayana* is a classic in the Bengali language, and Sridhar's *Ramayana* is a classic in the Mahratta language. Generations of Hindus in all parts of India have studied the ancient story in these modern translations ; they have heard it recited in the houses of the rich ; and they have seen it acted on the stage at religious festivals in every great town and every populous village through the length and breadth of India.

More than this, the story of Rama has inspired our

religious reformers, and purified the popular faith of our modern times. Rama, the true and dutiful, was accepted as the Spirit of God descended on earth, as an incarnation of Vishnu, the Preserver of the World. The great teacher Ramannuja proclaimed the monotheism of Vishnu in Southern India in the twelfth century ; the reformer Ramananda proclaimed the same faith in Northern India in the thirteenth or fourteenth century ; and his follower, the gifted Kabir, conceived the bold idea of uniting Hindus and Mahomedans in the worship of One God. "The God of the Hindus," he said, "is the God of the Mahomedans, be he invoked a *Rama* or *Ali*." "The city of the Hindu God is Benares, and the city of the Mahomedan God is Mecca ; but search your hearts, and there you will find the God both of Hindus and Mahomedans." "If the Creator dwells in tabernacles, whose dwelling is the universe ?"

The reformer Chaitanya preached the same sublime monotheism in Bengal, and the reformer Nanak in the Punjab, in the sixteenth century. And down to the present day the popular mind in India, led away by the worship of many images in many temples, nevertheless holds fast to the cardinal idea of one God, and believes the heroes of the ancient epics—*Krishna* and *Rama*—to be the incarnations of that God.

Down to the present century the lessons of the great epics are a perennial source of instruction to the people of India. Early in this century Reginald Heber, the Bishop of Calcutta, met among the wildest tribes of Western India the great Hindu reformer Swamy Narayan,

who had tamed the manners of his countrymen, and preached to them lessons of purity and humanity and the love of God, under the name of Krishna. The Bishop, escorted by the East India Company's guards met the Hindu reformer surrounded by his faithful followers.

"Had our troops been opposed to each other," writes the Lord Bishop of Calcutta, "mine, though less numerous, would have been doubtless far more effective from the superiority of arms and discipline. But, in moral grandeur, what a difference was there between his troops and mine. Mine neither knew me, nor cared for me; they escorted me faithfully, and would have defended me bravely, because they were ordered by their superiors to do so, and as they would have done for any other stranger of sufficient worldly rank to make such an attendance usual. The guards of Swami Narayan were his own disciples and enthusiastic admirers, men who had voluntarily repaired to hear his lessons, who now took a pride in doing him honour, and who would cheerfully fight to the last drop of blood rather than suffer a fringe of his garment to be handled roughly."

The Bishop entered into conversation with the reformer, and this is how the reformer explained his idea of God :

"Many names there may be, and have been, given to Him who *is*, and is the *same*, but whom we also, as well as the other Hindus, call Brahma. But there is a spirit in whom God *is* more specially, and who cometh from God, and is with God, and is likewise God, who hath made known to men the will of God and Father of all, whom we call *Krishna* and worship as God's image."

These are words which the Hindu reformer uttered to the Christian Bishop early in this century ; and these words describe to us accurately how the pictures of the

Perfect Man, handed down to us by our ancient epics, have enabled Indian reformers through centuries and thousands of years to rally the nations of India in the worship of one God, whose image on earth is the Perfect Man. In the teeming villages of Bengal, in the ancient shrines of Northern India, and far away in the towns and hamlets of Southern India, the prevailing faith of the million is a popular monotheism underlying the various ceremonials in honour of various images and forms,—and that popular monotheism generally recognises the heroes of the two ancient epics,—*Krishna* and *Rama*, as the earthly incarnations of the one God pervading and ruling the universe.

To know the two Indian epics is to understand the Indian people better. And to trace the influence of the Indian epics on the life and manners of the Hindu nation, and on the development of their modern languages, and religious reforms, is to comprehend the real history of the people during three thousand years. As mere literary works, the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* are among the greatest and loftiest creations of the human imagination. And unless I am very much mistaken in my estimate, the two epics of India, when they are better known in Europe, will take their rank along with the work of Homer, of Dante, and of Shakespeare, as undying works of art, composed for all times, all countries, and for all mankind.

XIV. HINDU PHILOSOPHY.

*[From the Indian Review, February 1900, being a
Review of Professor Max Muller's 'Six Systems
of Indian Philosophy.']*

AN account of the six systems of Hindu Philosophy was published in the early years of this century by Colebrooke, the most careful and accurate Sanscrit scholar that England has ever produced; and Dialogues on Hindu Philosophy were afterwards written and published by the eminent Indian scholar, Rev. K. M. Banerjee. The subject has since received a great deal of attention in Europe, and earnest workers have devoted years of their life in elucidating the thoughts of Indian philosophers to the modern world. The last and greatest of these workers are Professor Deussen and Professor Garbe. Professor Deussen's great work on Vedanta Philosophy, published in 1883, has thrown a flood of new light on the subject, and is recognised as an authoritative work by philosophers in Europe. And Professor Garbe's profound work on Sankhya Philosophy, published in 1894, has assigned to that system of philosophy its proper place in the European world.

Thus the work, begun by Colebrooke early in this century, has been completed towards its close, mainly by the endeavours of German scholar. To German scholars is due the fact that Hindu Philosophy has now an

assured place among the world's great systems of philosophy. To Professors Deussen and Garbe is due the credit of having placed the Vedanta Philosophy and the Sankhya Philosophy side by side with the philosophical systems of ancient Greece, and of modern Europe. No work on the History of Philosophy, no review of the philosophical systems of the world, will henceforth be recognised as complete unless it takes note of the work done in India by Indian philosophers. "And if hitherto," says Professor Max Muller, "no one would have called himself a philosopher who had not read and studied the works of Plato and Aristotle, of Descartes and Spinoza, of Locke, Hume, and Kant in the original, * * the time will come when no one will claim that name who is not acquainted at least with the two prominent systems of ancient Indian philosophy, the Vedanta and Sankhya."

Such being the work done by eminent scholars in this field of enquiry during the century which is about to close, it was necessary that the results should be placed before the general reader in a popular and readable volume; and no one was better fitted for the task than the veteran scholar, who combines a life-long familiarity with Sanscrit learning and Hindu thought with a power of lucid exposition which is not excelled by any writer of this generation. Professor Max Muller has spent his long and laborious life in the great and successful work of explaining and elucidating Indian literature and thought, history and religion for the western world; and his great work on the *Six Systems of Indian Philosophy* which is now before us is a fitting close to the labours of a

true and devoted worker who will always be appreciated in Europe and gratefully remembered in India.

But the present work is something more than a bare account of the *Six Systems of Indian Philosophy*. The full scope and the object of the work is explained in the following extract from the preface.

"My object in publishing the results of my own studies in Indian Philosophy was not so much to re-state the mere tenets of each system * * as to give a more comprehensive account of the philosophical activity of the Indian nation from the earliest times, and to show how intimately not only their religion but their philosophy also, was connected with national character of the inhabitants of India."

Speaking for ourselves, we should have preferred a more handy work giving a more concise account of the six systems; and such a compilation would probably have been more useful to the student and the general reader alike. But we appreciate, none the less, the learned Professor's more ambitious exposition of the philosophical activity of the Indian nation during well nigh two thousand years, and of the influence which philosophy has exerted on the religion and thought and life of the nation in India.

We pass by about a hundred and fifty pages of preliminary and explanatory discussions, and begin with chapter IV, which deals with Vedanta Philosophy. The learned author rightly takes up this system first, because it sends its roots far back into the ancient Upanishads, and because it continues to thrive to this day, as a living faith and religion among the modern Hindus. The cardinal doctrine of the Vedanta system

is explained in a few words by Hindu philosophers which Professor Max Muller has quoted :

"Brahman is true, the world is false, the soul is Brahman."

The idea is, that the whole universe proceeds from Brahman, and resolves itself into Brahman ; that the visible world is fleeting and unreal ; that each soul proceeds from the universal soul, and is finally absorbed in the universal soul.

The idea is thus explained in the Chhandogya Upanishad, 10th Khanda.

1. "These rivers, my son, run, the eastern (like the Ganga) toward the east, the western (like the Sindhu) toward the west. They go from sea to sea (*i. e.*, the clouds lift up the water from the sea to the sky, and send it back as rain to the sea). They become indeed sea. And as those rivers when they are in the sea, do not know, I am this or that river.

2. "In the same manner, my son, all these creatures, when they have come back from the True, know not that they have come back from the True."

The same idea is more fully explained in another passage of the Chhandogya Upanishad, third Khanda, which should be placed before our readers, though we do not find it quoted in the work before us.

"The intelligent whose body is spirit, whose form is light, whose thoughts are true, whose nature is like ether (omnipresent and invisible) from whom all works, all desires, all sweet odours and tastes proceed ; He who embraces all this, who never speaks and is never surprised.

"He is my soul within the heart, smaller than a corn of rice, smaller than a corn of barley, smaller than a mustard seed, smaller than a canary seed or the kernel of a canary seed. He is my soul within the heart, greater than earth, greater than the sky, greater than heaven, greater than all these worlds.

"He from whom all works, all desires, all sweet odours and tastes proceed, who embraces all this, who never speaks and is never surprised. He, my soul within the heart is Brahman. When I shall have departed from hence, I shall obtain Him."

The same cardinal doctrine which is found scattered in the Upanishads, and was handed down from generation to generation and from century to century, was at last recast and condensed in the Vedanta Sutas of Badarayana, which are recognized as the authoritative text of Vedanta Philosophy. It is unnecessary to quote more than one or two short pages from these Sutas.

"The sea is one and not other than its water ; yet waves, foam, spray, drops, froth and other modifications of it differ from each other. (And thus the universal soul is one and not other from the creatures proceeding from it and differing from each other)."

Vedanta Sutra, II. 1.

"Like the sun and other luminaries, seemingly multiplied by reflexion though really single, and like space apparently sub-divided in containing vessels, in supreme Light (seemingly multiplied in creatures) is without difference or distinction."

Vedanta Sutra, III. 2.

"Having annulled by fruition other works which had begun to have effect, having enjoyed the recompense and suffered the pains of good and bad actions, the possessor of divine knowledge, on the demise of the body, proceeds to a re-union with Brahman."

Vedanta Sutra, IV, 1.

We have dwelt so long on the cardinal doctrine of Vedanta Philosophy because we cannot undertake to examine, in this brief review, the other tenets and principles of that vast system of philosophy which was reared like a mighty fabric on this simple cardinal doctrine. These tenets and principles have been explained

by Professor Max Muller in a long but lucid chapter of over a hundred pages, and we refer our readers to that learned work. We can only find room to quote from that work some general remarks with which the learned author concludes his review of the system.

"It is surely astounding that such a system as the Vedanta should have been slowly elaborated by the indefatigable and intrepid thinkers of India thousands of years ago, a system which even now makes us feel giddy, as in mounting the last steps of an ancient Gothic cathedral. None of our philosophers, not excepting Heraclitus, Plato, Kant, or Hegel, has ventured to erect such a spire, never frightened by storms or lightnings. Stone follows on stone in regular succession after once the first step has been made, after once it has been clearly seen that in the beginning there can have been but One, as there will be but One in the end, whether we call it Atman or Brahman. * * We need not praise or try to imitate a Colosseum, but if we have any heart for the builders of former days we cannot help feeling that it was colossal and stupendous effort. And this is the feeling which I cannot resist in examining the ancient Vedanta. Other philosophers have denied the reality of the world, perceived by us, but no one has ventured to deny at the same time the reality of what we call the Ego, the senses and the mind, and their inherent forms. And yet after lifting the self above body and soul, after uniting heaven and earth; God and Man, Brahman and Atman, these Vedanta philosophers have destroyed nothing in the life of the phenomenal beings who have to act and to fulfil their duties in this phenomenal world. On the contrary, they have shown that there can be nothing phenomenal without something that is real, and that goodness and virtue, faith and works, are necessary as a preparation, nay as a *sine qua non*, for the attainment of that highest knowledge which brings the soul back to its source and to its home, and restores it to its true nature, to its true self-hood in Brahman."

Before leaving the subject of Vedanta system we desire to say one word about the two different interpretations of that system by two eminent commentators, *viz.*,

Sankara who flourished in the ninth century, and Ramanuja who flourished in the twelfth century after Christ. Sankara's system is *Advaita* or absolute Monism;—the Universal Soul is all that exists, individuals and the phenomenal world have no reality. Ramanuja's system is *Visishta Advaita* or Monism with a distinction :—the Universal Soul is the highest reality and is full of compassion and love with individual souls which are also real. This is the special and humane feature of Ramanuja's idea of God, as compared with the icy coldness of Sankara's idea. And if Sankara's idea has found favour with the philosophers and learned disputants, Ramanuja's idea of a compassionate God has found favour with the million, and has inspired a long line of subsequent reformers like Ramananda and Kabir, Nanak and Chaitanya, Dadu and Ram Mohan Roy. It is thus that the old and the new are connected together in India by an indissoluble chain, that the Upanishads, composed a thousand years before Christ, are connected with the teachings of the reformers of this century, that philosophy and religion have acted and reacted on each other, and that the doctrine of a Universal Soul, full of compassion for individual souls which live and move and have their being in Him, is the living faith at the present day of the Hindu cultivator and labourer as of the Hindu pandit and the devotee.

The Purva Mimansa system concerns itself mainly with religious rites, and as a system of philosophy is of minor importance. We pass it by and come to

Chapter VI of the book which deals with Sankhya Philosophy in more than a hundred pages. The Vedanta and the Sankhya stand pre-eminent among the six systems of Hindu philosophy,—the former for its noble conception of one Universal source of all objects and all beings, the latter for its fearless analysis of the mind and its faculties. As an effort of generalization,—an attempt to grasp the secret and the origin of the limitless world with its varied and varying and multitudinous creatures,—the Vedanta system has never been surpassed. As an effort of introspection,—an endeavour to analyse the senses and the mind and the phenomena which leave their impress on the unchangeable soul,—the Sankhya Philosophy has seldom been equalled.

In dealing with the Sankhya system Professor Max Muller appears to have lighted on an important discovery. Colebrooke and Wilson, Lassen and Windischmann, Pantier and St. Hilaire relied on the famous Sankhya Karikas of Iswar Krishna, the date of which is about the commencement of the Christian era. Professor Max Muller relies on the Tatwa Samasa which he considers to be the original Sankhya Sutras, and the oldest record of the Sankhya Philosophy.

Sankhya Philosophy differs essentially from Vedanta Philosophy in this that the Vedanta is strictly a system of Monism, the Sankhya is a system of Dualism. The Vedanta resolves all objects and all beings to the One Universal soul; the Sankhya maintains that Nature and Soul, *Prakriti* and *Purusha*, are eternal and co-existent.

From *Prakriti* are derived not only the subtle and grosser elements but the senses, the organs of Action, the *Manas* or faculty of Perception, *Ahankara* or Consciousness and *Buddhi* or Intellect. In the language of European philosophy *Manas* receives sensations and makes them into actual perceptions; *Ahankara* individualises them as "Mine," *Buddhi* turns them into "concepts" or "judgments." In the language of a Hindu commentator, "As the headmen of the village collect the taxes from the villagers and pay them to the Governor of the District, as the local Governor pays the amount to the minister, and the minister receives it for the use of the king, so the *Manas* or Perception having received impressions from the senses transfers them to *Ahankara* or Consciousness; and *Ahankara* delivers them to *Buddhi* or the Intellect who receives charge of them for the sovereign *Purusha* or soul." It is remarkable that, at a time when the functions of the brain were yet imperfectly understood, Sankhya philosophers held that perception, consciousness and even intellect,—all except the soul,—derived their origin from matter. And it is still more remarkable that they traced the origin of the subtle and the grosser elements to consciousness. Hindu philosophers herein seem to have anticipated the philosophy of Berkeley and Hume that external objects are only "permanent possibilities of sensations."

Purusha or Soul has a distinct origin of its own. It is linked with Nature, *i.e.*, with corporeal body for deriving knowledge and for the fulfilment of its destiny. When that purpose has been attained, the soul is eman-

icipated from matter, and continues to live in its isolation from matter, ever after.

Such is the nearest outline of the Sankhya Philosophy, a system of Philosophy which requires the most careful study and the deepest thought. In the words of Mr. Davies, the translator of the Sankhya Karikas, the latest German philosophy of Schopenhauer and Hartman is but a reproduction of the Sankhya Philosophy in a more elaborate form. "In this respect the human intellect has gone over the same ground that it occupied more than two thousand years ago ; but on a more important point it has taken a step in retreat. Kapila recognized fully the existence of a soul in man, forming indeed his proper nature,—the absolute ego, of Fichte,—distinct from matter and immortal ; but our latest philosophy, both here and in Germany, can see in man only a highly developed physical organization. "All external things," says Kapila 'were formed that the soul might know itself and be free.' 'The study of psychology is vain,' says Schopenhauer, 'for there is no Psyche.' " *

We have dwelt only on the cardinal principles of the Sankhya Philosophy, because in this brief review we cannot undertake to explain, or even to make the briefest mention of its minor tenets. We must therefore again refer our readers to the lucid exposition in Professor Max Muller's great work. The most serious charge against the system is that it is an atheistical sys-

* Davies, Preface to Hindu Philosophy.

tem, denying the existence of God. This charge against Kapila, the founder of Sankhya Philosophy, is not altogether correct, for as Professor Max Muller points out, "He simply says,—and in that respect he does not differ much from Kant,—that there are no logical proofs to establish that existence, but neither does he offer any such proofs for denying it." But even this passive negation of God was repulsive to the Hindu mind, and led to the use of a new system of Philosophy,—the Yoga system, which combines with the tenets of the Sankhya the faith and belief in a supreme Deity.

The Yoga system, as a system of Philosophy, is based on the Sankhya system. "Yoga is indeed, as the Brahmins say, Sankhya, only modified, particularly in one point, namely, in its attempt to develop and systematise an ascetic discipline by which concentration of thought could be attained, and by admitting devotion to the Lord God as part of that discipline." We therefore pass over this subject and come to chapter VIII of Professor Max Muller's work which treats of the Nyaya system or Logic.

The four *Pramanas* or means of acquiring knowledge, according to the Nyaya system, are Perception, Inference, Analogy, and Testimony or word. It is under the head of Inference that we find that Hindu syllogism which has so startling a resemblance to the Greek syllogism. The Hindu syllogism consists of five terms thus :

Assertion : The mountain has fire.

Reason : For it smokes.

- *Instance* : Whatever smokes has fire, as the kitchen.
- Application* : The mountain smokes.
- Conclusion* : Therefore it has fire.

If we omit the first two terms, which are only a statement of a proposition, the Hindu syllogism is a perfect syllogism of Aristotle. And European thinkers have naturally held that there was some communication of knowledge between the Hindus and the Greeks to make so remarkable a coincidence possible. Gorres undertook to prove that the Greeks had actually retained some technical terms of Hindu Logic, and inferred that the Greeks borrowed the syllogism from the Hindus. Niebuhr and others held, on the other hand, that the Hindus borrowed it from the Greeks. Professor Max Muller with his usual caution adopts a middle path :

“It seems to me that until it can be proved *historically* that the Greeks could freely converse with Indians in Greek or in Sanscrit on metaphysical subjects or *vice versa*, or until technical philosophical terms can be discovered in Sanscrit of Greek, or in Greek of Sanscrit, origin, it will be best to accept facts and to regard both Greek and Indian philosophy as products of the intellectual soil of India and of Greece, and derive from their striking similarities this simple conviction only, that in philosophy also there is a wealth of truth which forms the common heirloom of all mankind, and may be discovered by all nations if they search for it with honesty and perseverance.”

This is a safe way of disposing of the question which will hardly satisfy curious enquirers. As Gautama the founder of Hindu Logic lived centuries before Aristotle, and even before Buddha, and as Logic was a popular subject of study among the learned Hindus before the time of Aristotle and Alexander the Great, it is scarcely

possible to deny the indebtedness of the younger to the older nation in a matter in which the coincidence so pointedly suggests one common origin.

But we must bring this brief review to a close. We pass by the system of mental philosophy included in the Nyaya system which is similar to that of the Sankhya system, but recognizes One Supreme Soul. We pass by the many technical terms of Hindu Logic, terms which have been explained and illustrated by Hindu logicians with all the acuteness and subtlety of reasoning of the European schoolmen of the Middle Ages. And we also pass by the categories of objects of knowledge,—and other important matters which are fully and lucidly dealt with in this chapter of the Professor's work.

Nor need we prolong the present review by any detailed examination of the last of the six Indian systems,—the Vaisheshika or Atomic Philosophy. The cardinal principle of the system is that the whole Universe and all material substances are aggregates of atoms. The atoms are imperishable ; the aggregates perish by disintegration.

Such are the six systems of Indian Philosophy which have now been explained to English readers in one learned and comprehensive volume by the greatest Sanscrit scholar of Europe. And we cannot conclude this review better than by quoting some general remarks from his preface on certain characteristic features which pervade all systems of Indian Philosophy.

“What I admire in Indian philosophers is that they never try to deceive us as to their principles and the consequences

of their theories. If they are idealists even to the verge of nihilism they say so ; and if they hold that the objective world requires a real, though not necessarily a visible or tangible substratum, they are never afraid to speak out. They are *bona fide* idealists or materialists, monists or dualists, theists or atheists, because their reverence for truth is stronger than their reverence for anything else. The Vedantist, for instance, is a "fearless idealist, and, as a monist, denies the reality of anything but the *One* Brahman, the Universal spirit which is to account for the whole of the phenomenal world. The followers of the Sankhya, on the contrary, though likewise idealists and believers in an unseen Purusha, (subject), and an unseen Prakriti (objective substance), leave us in no doubt that they are, and mean to be atheists, so far as the existence of an active God, a maker and ruler of the world is concerned. They do not allow themselves to be driven one inch beyond their self-chosen position. * * Kapila never refers to Him in his Sutras. As a careful reasoner, however, he does not go so far as to say that he can prove the non-existence of such a Being, but he is satisfied with stating, like Kant, that he cannot establish His existence by the ordinary channels of evidential knowledge. * * Whatever we may think of such views of the world as are put forward by the Sankhya, the Vedanta, and other systems of Indian philosophy, there is one thing which we cannot help admiring, and that is the straightforwardness and perfect freedom with which they are elaborated. However imperfect the style in which their theories have been clothed may appear from a literary point of view it seems to me the very perfection for the treatment of philosophy. It never leaves us in any doubt as to the exact opinions held by each philosopher. We may miss the development and the dialectic eloquence with which Plato and Hegel propound their thoughts but we can always appreciate the perfect freedom, freshness and downrightness with which each searcher after truth follows his track without ever looking right or left."

XV. HINDU RELIGION.

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MUCH has been written from time to time of the religious practices and observances of the Hindus, their ancient and rigid caste system, their strange celebrations and festivities, their gorgeous shrines and temples, their annual pilgrimages to holy spots and sacred streams. Much, too, has been said of the silent and uncomplaining religious devotion of their women, and the self-imposed vows and penances of their men, which remind one strongly of the practices of mediæval Europe. But in these popular and interesting accounts of the Hindu religion and customs we often miss the undercurrent of thought and philosophy which unites and holds together the people of a vast Continent like India, and which has enabled them to resist every outside influence, Greek or Persian, Moslem or Christian, for thousands of years. For it may be truly said that in India alone we see the faiths and traditions of the long past still unbroken and still instinct with life and vitality. The ancient faiths of Egypt and Babylon are now things of the past, and the religion of ancient Greece and Rome lives only in poetry and art. The doctrines of the old Medes and Persians survive among a handful of Parsees

now living in India, and even the doctrines of Confucius, in China, have been transformed and changed by Buddhism imported from India. Among the Hindus only, the link between the present and the ancient past remains unbroken ; and though the forms and practices of religious worship have undergone modifications, the cardinal doctrine and the inner thought of Hinduism are the same to-day as we find them in the Upanishads and the ancient Vedas. They run through the history of thousands of years like a perennial stream, which nourishes and fertilizes the surrounding land and covers it with vegetation and life. And it is worth the while of the modern student to penetrate through the outer forms and observances of modern Hinduism, in order to obtain some glimpses of that inner thought which connects it with the earliest forms of Aryan civilisation and of Aryan religious thought.

The earliest form of religious worship in India was the worship of Nature—sacrifices and prayers offered to the Powers of Nature. The Rig Veda is the most ancient religious work of the Aryan world, and is a collection of 1,028 hymns, which were uttered at sacrifices by the ancient Hindu worshipper four thousand years ago. The sky was invoked under various names : Dyu, or the bright sky ; Indra, or the rain-giver ; Varuna, or the covering expanse of heaven. The Rain-Giver was a martial god, who helped the Aryan Hindus in their battles with the dark-skinned Aborigines, and who rent the clouds (Vrita or Ahi) by his thunderbolt in order to give rain-water to the sons of men.

"We sing the heroic deeds done by Indra the Thunderer. He destroyed Ahi and caused rains to descend, and opened out the paths for the mountain streams to roll."

"Indra slayed Ahi resting on the mountains, Twashtri had made the far-reaching thunderbolt for him. Waters in torrents flowed towards the sea, as cows run towards their calves."
Rig Veda, I, 32, 1 and 2.

More striking and more sublime is the invocation of the sinner to the Covering Heaven, who sees all, who binds the sinner in chains, and who can free them in his mercy.

"O Varuna ! Deliver us from the sins of our fathers , deliver us from the sins committed in our persons. Deliver Vasishtha like a calf from its tether, like a thief who has feasted on stolen cattle.

"Not wilfully have we sinned, O Varuna ! but error or wine, dice or anger, has misled us. Even the elder leads the younger astray, even sleep leads to sin."

Rig Veda, VII, 86, 5 and 6.

The sun was similarly invoked under various names : Savitri or Surya or the Adityas, the suns of the different months of the year. Fire, which received libation and offerings, was Agni, the priest of the gods ; and Soma, the libation itself, was also an object of invocation. The Maruts were the storm-winds which helped the Rain-Giver in milking rain from the clouds, and the Ushas was the lovely Dawn-goddess, who waked all creatures to life, and nourished them, and sent them to their work.

"Beauteous daughter of the sky,
Hold thy ruddy light on high,
Grant us wealth and grant us day,
Bring us food and morning's ray.
White-robed goddess of the morning sky,
Bring us light, let night's deep shadows fly !

"Fathers hailed thy glorious light,
 We too hail thee, goddess bright,
 For like ship that ploughs the sea,
 Sky-borne chariot bringeth thee.
 Come then, goddess, in thy radiant car,
 Come and bring thy joyous light from far !

"Come like housewife gentle-hearted,
 Tending us, for night's departed,
 Grant another joyous day
 Unto beasts and herds so gay.
 Let all creatures to their work repair,
 Birds with joyous accents fill the air !"

Rig Veda, I, 48, 1, 3 and 5.

Such was the simple invocation of the Powers of Nature in the ancient days, and such was the popular form of worship. But the sacrificers, invoking the various names, did not forget that they were the different manifestations of the One Supreme Being, who comprehended all, and who created all.

"Great is the ALL-CREATOR ; He creates all, He supports all, He presides over all. The blest obtain the fulfilment of their desires in the sky where the One lives—beyond the constellation of the Great Bear.

"He is the FATHER who made us, who knows all creatures and all things. *He is One, though He bears the names of many Gods.* Others wish to know of Him."

Rig Veda, X, 82, 2 and 3.

This was the inner thought and the true philosophy of Vedic religion in India ; and though we may popularly describe that religion as the worship of the various Powers of Nature under various names, it is nevertheless necessary for us to remember that the Hindu mind, even in that ancient age, penetrated beyond the visible manifestations and phenomena of Nature, and grasped the

idea of that unity of power which modern science, too, teaches us to recognise as the moving and inspiring force of the universe.

This cardinal doctrine of a Unity, concealed under the changing phenomena of Nature, is more fully developed in the Upanishads, the final results of Vedic teaching. It is the All-pervading Breath, the Universal Soul, which manifests itself in all the universe, which comprehends the universe, and into which the universe will merge in the end.

"The Intelligent, whose body is spirit, whose form is light, whose thought is truth, whose nature is ether like, from whom all works, all desires, all sweet odours and tastes proceed—He, who embraces all this, who never speaks and is never surprised.

"He is the soul within the heart, smaller than a corn of rice, smaller than a corn of barley, smaller than a mustard seed, smaller than a canary seed or the kernel of a canary seed. He also is my soul within my heart, greater than the earth, greater than the sky, greater than heaven, greater than all the worlds.

"He from whom all works, all desires, all sweet odours and tastes proceed, who embraces all this, who never speaks, and is never surprised; He, my soul within my heart, is BRAHMA. When I shall have departed from hence, I shall obtain Him."

Chhandogya Upanishad, III. 14.

And when systems of Hindu philosophy were fully developed, some centuries before the Christian era, out of the vague speculations of previous ages, the Vedanta philosophy grasped the cardinal doctrine which had been handed down from the preceding centuries, and fixed it as the abiding principle of all subsequent Hindu thought.

"The sea is one and not other from its water ; yet waves, foam, spray, drops, froth and other modifications of it differ from each other. (And so all creatures differ from each other, but are sprung from one PRIMAL CAUSE.)"

Brahma Sutra, II. 1 and 5.

"Like the sun * * seemingly multiplied by reflection, though really single, and like space apparently divided in containing vessels, but really without division, the SUPREME LIGHT is without difference and without division."

Brahma Sutra, III. 2.

It must not be supposed, however, that this philosophical doctrine comprehended all the popular beliefs of the mass of the people. On the contrary, the old sacrifices to the Powers of Nature, invoked under different names and worshipped as different deities, continued from the Vedic times, two thousand years before Christ, to the centuries immediately preceding the Christian era. Indeed, the sacrifices became more elaborate and ostentatious with the lapse of centuries, and as the priests formed themselves into a separate and hereditary caste, they multiplied rules and observances, and a vast body of religious literature concerned itself with the minute details of sacrificial rites. The simple faith of the early Vedic times was, to some extent, lost in an ostentatious performance of rites and ceremonies, and all these sacred rites and observances were confined to the Aryan Hindus. The millions of the non-Aryan people who had adopted the civilisation, the language, and even the religious faith of their Aryan teachers and masters, were still jealously kept out of the pale of Vedic rites and sacred laws ; and thus a great and unfortunate distinction between the handful of Aryan Hindus and the mass

of Hinduised non-Aryans was perpetrated and deepened with the lapse of centuries. On the one hand, the Aryan communities, with the pride and exclusiveness of all civilised and conquering races in ancient and modern times, jealously guarded their privileges against the non-Aryans. On the other hand, the non-Aryan races, having assumed the mantle of Aryan civilisation and customs, and having risen to political power in Magadha and other provinces, demanded admission into the charmed circle. The anomaly required a solution, the times called for a leveller—and a great leveller arose in Gautama the Buddha.

This is the true explanation of the rise of Buddhism in India in the sixth century before Christ. Gautama the Buddha did not regard himself as the founder of a new religion, but as a teacher of true Hinduism, a reformer who welcomed all worshippers of all races and castes within the pale of his reformed faith. His religion is a system of self-culture—a striving after perfect holiness—to be attained, if not in this life, then after a succession of re-births. Gods and men, and all living creatures, are striving for that perfect state of holiness and are passing through a number of re-incarnations to attain it. Every deed in this life, every Karma, leads to its legitimate result in the next life, and when at last the fetters which link us to life are broken by prolonged self-culture, we attain that blessed state of holiness, that Nirvana which is the Buddhist's heaven. All these doctrines were adaptations from the doctrines of the ancient Hindu Upanishads; but Gautama the Buddha

proclaimed them to all men of all nations, and thus he spread a catholic religion which eventually embraced the nations of Asia from Ceylon to Siberia, and from Kashmir to China and Japan.

As may well be conceived, this religion of self-culture and of striving after holiness, is specially rich in its moral teachings, and the precepts and maxims of Buddhism are unsurpassed in their moral elevation and grandeur. We quote a few below :

"5. Hatred does not cease by hatred at any time; hatred ceases by love ; this is its nature."

"51. Like a beautiful flower, full of colour, but without scent, are the fine and fruitless words of him who does not act accordingly."

"129. All men tremble at punishment, all men fear death. Remember that you are like unto them, and do not kill, nor cause slaughter."

"130. All men tremble at punishment, all men love life. Remember that you are like unto them, and do not kill nor cause slaughter."

"183. Not to commit sin, to do good, to purify one's mind, this is the teaching of the prophets."

"197. Let us live happily not hating those who hate us. Among men who hate us, let us live free from hatred."

"223 Let one overcome anger by love, let him overcome evil by good. Let him overcome the greedy by liberality, the liar by truth."

232. The fault of others is easily perceived, but that of oneself is difficult to perceive ; a man winnows his neighbour's faults like chaff, but his own fault he hides, as the cheat hides the bad die from the gambler."

"260. A man is not an Elder because his head is grey. His age may be ripe, but he is called old in vain."

"261. He in whom there is truth, love, restraint, moderation, he who is free from impurity and wise, he is called an Elder."

"393. A man does not become a Brahman by his platted hair, by his family or by birth. In whom there is truth and righteousness,, he is blessed, he is a Brahman."

"394. What is the use of platted hair, O fool, what of the raiment of goatskins? Within thee there is ravening, but the outside thou makest clean."

Dhammapada.

Maxims like these appealed to the higher sentiments of men and women of many nations. Buddhist missionaries found attentive listeners in various distant lands, as ~~far~~ as Palestine and Egypt and Greece, in the centuries preceding the birth of Christ; and the pure-souled Jesus proclaimed once more that religion of charity, forgiveness, of love, which the pure-souled Gautama had proclaimed five hundred years before. In India the ancient and exclusive faith of the Aryan Hindus lived for a thousand years side by side with the reformed and catholic religion of Gautama. Brahmans and Aryan castes clung to their ancient privileges, while millions of the lower classes entered by the gate opened by the reformer. Hindu shrines and Buddhist monasteries flourished side by side in every town of India, from the third century before Christ to the seventh century after Christ; Hindu sacrifices and Buddhist celebrations were performed in the same villages; Hindu and Buddhist citizens lived in peace and harmony in the same localities for centuries. It is a remarkable instance of the spirit of toleration of the Hindus, that we do not read of any religious persecutions in India during the thousand years, except when some cruel warrior or invader signalised his conquest

by acts of cruelty. The communities were divided in faith, but lived in harmony and peace.

It is generally believed that Buddhism has now disappeared from India, because it failed to shake the stronghold of Hinduism. The very reverse of this is the truth. Buddhism has disappeared from India, because its work is done ; the Hindus are united, and Hinduism has accepted and adopted Buddhist maxims and observances. The distinction between Aryans and non-Aryans exists no longer, all Hindus from the Punjab to Travancore, although divided into profession-castes, are the followers of the same religion, and perform the same rites. The Vedic sacrifices, from which the non-Aryans were jealously excluded, have died by reason of this very exclusiveness, or survive only in marriage and funeral rites which all Hindus have an equal right to perform. Buddhist celebrations and pilgrimages were imitated and surpassed by modern Hindu celebrations and pilgrimages, and Gautama the Buddha himself found a place in the modern Hindu pantheon. It is necessary to remember these facts to understand the history of Buddhism in India ; Buddhism has disappeared from India because its mission is fulfilled. Modern Hinduism has eschewed its old sacrificial rites and exclusive Aryan privileges, has adopted the joyous celebrations of the million, and has re-united Aryans and non-Aryans into one united Hindu community. These are the abiding results of the work of Gautama the Buddha in India.

Thus, in the sixth and seventh century after Christ,

Hinduism arose in India in its newer form. In all cardinal doctrines it has remained faithful to the old teachings of the Upanishads. It recognises One Supreme Being—the All-pervading Breath. It recognises the universe to be an emanation from Him, subsisting in Him, and finally resolving itself in him. It recognises rewards and punishments in future lives according to the needs of this life. And it acknowledges that all souls will be finally absorbed in the Deity—the Universal Soul. Herein the religion of to-day is the religion of three thousands years ago. But in rites and observances and popular beliefs, modern Hinduism is widely divergent from the Vedic religion. The Vedic religion insisted on the worship of the Powers of Nature ; modern Hinduism inculcates belief in the threefold power of Supreme Being, known as the Hindu Trinity, under the names Brahma, Vishnu and Siva. The Vedic hymns celebrated the deeds of Nature-gods ; modern Hinduism has multiplied the myths and legends of these gods until they form a vast system of popular mythology for the people. The Vedic religion insisted on sacrifices to the fire as its form of worship ; modern Hindus pay worship to images and rejoice in joyous celebrations and pilgrimages.

Much has been written about the modern religious practices of the Hindus, and of the rival sects which have prevailed in India during a thousand years and more. But we miss again in these popular accounts a real explanation of that secret which has held two hundred millions of people together, a true delineation

of that living faith which still inspires modern Hindus and makes them a living nation. Sects of Vishnu and of Siva have divided the millions of India for ages, but the different sects merely quarrel about a name, as they often did in mediæval Europe, and each sect worship under the name of its own popular deity the supreme Being—the personal God—who ministers to the needs of his creatures. The followers of Siva call Him by the name; the more numerous followers of Vishnu believe that he descended to earth as Rama, as Krishna, or as Buddha, for the salvation of man and the triumph of righteousness. Thus the relations of the worshipper and the Being worshipped are drawn closer; and, as in the Vedic times, men address the Deity as a personal, a beneficent, a helping friend. For the popular mind needed an object nearer to the heart and clearer to the understanding than the Universal Soul of the Upanishads; and Krishna supplied this place, which Buddha had filled for centuries with the million. The legends of Krishna gradually supplanted the birth-stories of Buddha; pilgrimages to Mathura and Brindavan and Jagganath took the place of pilgrimages to Buddhist shrines; and even Buddhist monastic life was replaced by a system of monastic life among the followers of Vishnu and Krishna. The religious Hindu mind has struggled through long centuries towards a simple and popular form of monotheism; and amidst the dissensions of rural sects, and in spite of the worship of many images in many temples, the millions of India have held to the cult of an underlying monotheism—a faith

in a personal and beneficent and helping Deity whom the simple worshippnr calls by the name of Siva or Vishnu.

When the Hindus lost their national independence, and submitted to the rule of the Moslem conquerors at the close of the twelfth century, their national faith survived and burned as brightly as ever. A succession of Hindu religious reformers rose from the eleventh to the nineteenth century, repeating to the listening millions the lessons of the past, and turning their hearts to the living God, who ministered to the needs of His creatures in their sorrow and in their sufferings.

Ramanuja was the first of this glorious band of modern Hindu reformers. He lived in Southern India in the eleventh century ; he proclaimed the unity of God under the name of Vishnu ; and he preached the love of God as the way to salvation. Sectarian opposition compelled him to fly from his own country ; like other prophets he was honoured outside his country ; and in Mysore he converted the king and the people to his own faith, and established seven hundred monasteries, dedicated to the faith of Vishnu, before he died.

Fifth in apostolic succession from Ramanuja was the great Ramanada, who spread the same simple monotheism in Northern India. He made Benares his headquarters, but wandered far and near to preach the faith of Vishnu. Unlike his predecessor, who had written in Sanscrit, Ramananda preached to the people and wrote for the people in their own modern tongue ; and the Hindi language of Northern India was enriched by the great

religious movement inaugurated by this gifted and popular reformer.

The history of religious reforms in India knows of no brighter name than that of Kabir, the disciple of Ramananda. He took up the work which his master had begun, and he conceived the bold idea of uniting Hindus and Mahomedans alike in the worship of one God. The God of the Hindus, he said, was the same as the God of the Mahomedans, be he invoked as Rama or Alla. "What avails it to wash your mouth, count your beads, bathe in holy streams, and bow in temples, if, whilst you mutter your prayers, or go on pilgrimages, deceitfulness is in your hearts?" "If the Creator dwells in tabernacles, whose dwelling is the universe?" "The city of the Hindu God is Benares, and the city of the Mussulman God is Mecca, but search your hearts, and there you will find the God both of Hindus and Mussulmans."

What Kabir attempted in Central India, the gifted Nanak endeavoured to achieve in the Punjab. Born in 1469, and therefore a contemporary of Martin Luther, he invited Hindus and Mussulmans to unite in the worship of one God. The great Sikh community which he founded was for a long time a peaceful religious fraternity, until the unwise persecutions of later Mahomedan Emperors turned them into the most warlike race of modern India.

Bengal had her religious reformer in the lovable and loved Chaitanya, who was born in 1486. He, too, invited Mussulmans and Hindus to unite in the worship of One God, under the name of Vishnu; and at the

present day the entire population of Bengal, except the upper castes, are worshippers of Vishnu. And Gujrat, too, had its teacher in Dadu, who has left behind him a body of sacred literature extending to 20,000 lines, and whose teachings were spread all through Rajputana by fifty disciples.

The stream of religious faith has not yet dried up in India; the great Ram Mohan Roy and Dayanand Saraswati preached once more to their countrymen the faith of One God in the present century; and all over India thoughtful and earnest men are turning their eyes to the past, and are seeking for reform in religion as well as in social customs in the light of their ancient Scriptures and their ancient Philosophy.

The loyalty of India to her past is a puzzle to outsiders; the unique phenomenon presented in India of a living stream of ancient faith and tradition flowing from the dawn of history to the present time, unbroken by political revolutions, and uninterrupted by foreign influences, Greek or Turanian, Moslem or Christian, is the most wonderful fact in the history of the human race. And we can only dimly comprehend the secret of this phenomenon, if we try to grasp the underlying doctrines and the sustaining and nourishing forces of ancient Hindu thought, religion and philosophy.

XVI. THE DEATH OF PROFESSOR MAX MULLER.

*[Speech delivered at the English Goethe Society on
November, 23, 1900.]*

MR. CHAIRMAN : In response to your call I rise to perform a mournful duty, and to say a word on behalf of the people of India to express the sorrow which they feel at the death of one, who was not only one of the greatest of oriental scholars, but one of the truest friends of India. I do not exaggerate facts, Sir, when I state, that for a period of half a century, my countrymen have looked upon Professor Max Muller, not only as the best interpreter of ancient Indian literature and philosophy and religious thought in Europe, but also as the truest friend of the people of modern India. For half a century they have watched his literary labours with admiration ; they have hailed his vindication of modern India with gratitude ; and they have regarded him with feelings of affection and of love, heightened by the long distance from which they contemplated his sympathetic work. And the few of my countrymen who had the privilege of approaching him, and knowing him personally, have found in him a true and devoted friend.

I will not recapitulate all the life-long labours of the venerable Professor, of which my friend, Dr.

Oswald, has given a full account. The publication of the Rig Veda, which commenced in 1849, opened a new epoch in historic and religious studies in India, and helped us to turn to the past for inspiration and for guidance in solving the great religious and social problems which lie before us in the path of our future progress. Professor Max Muller's numerous contributions to the elucidation of the literature, religion, and philosophy of ancient India have helped us in this progress; and his sympathetic works on modern India have inspired us with courage, with confidence, and with hope. And lastly the splendid series of the Sacred Books of the East, which he has edited, has opened out for many of us even in India, not only a rich storehouse of ancient knowledge and wisdom, but a living stream of pure thought and learning, which sustains and nourishes and strengthens us in our conduct in life, and in our struggles for the progress and true reform.

As a personal friend, he has known and sympathised with some of the most distinguished Indians of two generations. As a young man, he knew the princely Dwarka Nath Tagore, who was in Europe fifty years ago, and who now lies buried in a London cemetery. He corresponded with his son, the venerable Debendra Nath Tagore, head of the oldest branch of the Brahma Samaj of India. He was a friend of Keshab Chandra Sen, whose earnest religious reforms and great eloquence were admired in this country thirty years ago. He frequently corresponded with Dr. Bhan

Daji of Bombay and Dr. Rajendra Lal Mitra of Calcutta ; he knew Dr. Bhandarkar and Pandita Rama Bai ; he was a friend of every great scholar, religious teacher, and social reformer, that India has produced within these two generations. Last and humblest among the students of ancient Indian literature, whom the Professor honoured with his friendship, was my humble self. Fifteen years ago, when I produced my translation of the Rig Veda into my own vernacular language, my work received his sympathetic recognition and his warm support. Twelve years ago, when I wrote a historical account of the Civilisation of Ancient India, I received from him encouragement and help. Two years ago, when I prepared my condensed metrical translation of the Indian Epic, the Mahabharata, Professor Max Muller kindly wrote for it that learned Introduction which graces the volume. And only last year, I had the proud privilege of dedicating my metrical translation of the other Indian Epic, the Ramayana, to him who had all his life laboured for my country and my countrymen.

Words cannot express what my countrymen feel on this mournful occasion. But, nevertheless, I am grateful to you, Sir, for having permitted me to express, however inadequately, our sorrow at the death of one of the greatest of oriental scholars, and one of the truest of our friends.

XVII. SEPARATION OF JUDICIAL AND EXECUTIVE SERVICES.

[Memorial submitted to the Secretary of State for India on July 1, 1899. This document is included in the present collection as it refers to and supports Mr. Romesh Dutt's scheme of the separation of the services published in 1893. Mr. Dutt's scheme is appended to the Memorial.]

MY LORD,

We the undersigned beg leave to submit to you, in the interests of the administration of justice, the following considerations in favour of the separation of judicial from executive duties in India. The present system, under which the chief executive official of a District collects the revenue, controls the police, institutes prosecutions, and at the same time exercises large judicial powers, has been, and still is, condemned not only by the general voice of public opinion in India, but also by Anglo-Indian officers, and by high legal authorities. The state of Indian opinion with reference to the question is so well known as to require neither proof nor illustration. The separation of judicial and executive functions has been consistently urged throughout a long series of years alike by the Indian press and by public bodies and individuals well qualified to represent Indian public opinion. We propose, however, to refer briefly to some of the numerous occasions

upon which the principle of separation has been approved by official authorities; next, to explain the nature of the existing grievance, and the proposed remedy; and finally, to discuss objections which have been or may be advanced against alteration of the present system. This Memorial, therefore, consists of three sections, which it may be convenient to indicate as follows:

- (a) AN HISTORICAL RETROSPECT (Paras. 2 to 10);
- (b) THE EXISTING GRIEVANCE, AND THE REMEDY (Paras. 11 to 14);
- (c) ANSWERS TO POSSIBLE OBJECTIONS (Paras. 15 to 18).

(a)—AN HISTORICAL RETROSPECT.

2. So long ago as 1793 the Government of India, under Lord Cornwallis, recognised the dangers arising from the combination, in one and the same officer, of revenue with judicial duties. Section 1 of Regulation II, 1793, contained the following passage:

“All questions between Government and the landholders respecting the assessment and collection of the public revenue, and disputed claims between the latter and their rayats, or other persons concerned in the collection of their rents, have hitherto been cognizable in the Courts of *Muhal Adawlut*, or Revenue Courts. The Collectors of the Revenue preside in these Courts as Judges, and an appeal lies from their decision to the Board of Revenue, and from the decrees of that Board to the Governor-General in Council in the Department of Revenue. The proprietors can never consider the privileges which have been conferred upon them as secure whilst the revenue officers are vested with these judicial powers. Exclusive of the objections arising to these Courts from their irregular, summary and often *ex parte* proceedings, and from the Collectors being obliged to suspend the exercise

of their judicial functions whenever they interfere with their financial duties, it is obvious that, if the Regulations for assessing and collecting the public revenue are infringed, the revenue officers themselves must be the aggressors, and that individuals who have been wronged by them in one capacity can never hope to obtain redress from them in another. Their financial occupations equally disqualify them for administering the laws between the proprietors of land and their tenants. Other security, therefore, must be given to landed property and to the rights attached to it before the desired improvements in agriculture can be expected to be effected. Government must divest itself of the power of infringing in its executive capacity the rights and privileges which, as exercising the legislative authority, it has conferred on the landholders. The revenue officers must be deprived of their judicial powers. All financial claims of the public, when disputed under the Regulations, must be subjected to the cognizance of the Courts of Judicature superintended by Judges who, from their official situations and the nature of their trusts, shall not only be wholly uninterested in the result of their decisions, but bound to decide impartially between the public and the proprietors of land, and also between the latter and their tenants. The Collectors of the Revenue must not only be divested of the power of deciding upon their own acts, but rendered amenable for them to the Courts of Judicature, and collect the public dues subject to a personal prosecution for every exaction exceeding the amount which they are authorised to demand on behalf of the public, and for every deviation from the Regulations prescribed for the collection of it. No power will then exist in the country by which the rights vested in the landholders by the Regulations can be infringed, or the value of landed property affected."

3. These observations aptly anticipated the basis of the criticisms which during the succeeding century have so often been passed, as well by individuals as by public bodies of the highest authority, upon the strange union of the functions of constable and magistrate, public prosecutor and criminal judge, revenue collector and Appeal Court in revenue cases. In 1838 a Com-

mittee, appointed by the Government of Bengal to prepare a scheme for the more efficient organisation of the Police, issued its report. As a member of that Committee Mr. F. J. Halliday (afterwards Sir Frederick Halliday, sometime Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal and Member of the Council of the Secretary of State) drew up an important Minute in which, after citing at length the considerations that had been urged in favour of separating police from judicial duties in London, he stated that they applied with double force to India. The passage quoted with approval by Mr. Halliday declared that there was no more important principle in jurisprudence than the separation of the judicial from the executive ministerial functions; that a scheme to combine the duties of Judge and Sheriff, of Justice of the Peace and constable in the same individuals would be scouted as absurd as well as mischievous; that a magistrate ought to have no previous knowledge of a matter with which he had to deal judicially; and that the whole executive duty of preventing and detecting crimes should be thrown upon the police. In support of the proposition that these remarks applied with double force to India, Mr. Halliday wrote:—

“In England a large majority of offenders are, as here, tried and sentenced by the magistrates: but in the former country the cases so tried are comparatively of a trivial and unimportant nature. In India the powers of the Magistrates are much greater; their sentences extend to imprisonment for three years, and their jurisdiction embraces offences which, both for frequency and importance, are by far the weightiest subjects of the criminal administration of the country. The evil which this system produces is twofold:

it affects the fair distribution of justice and it impairs at the same time, the efficiency of the police. The union of Magistrate with Collector has been stigmatised as incompatible, but the junction of thief-catcher with judge is surely more anomalous in theory, and more mischievous in practice. So long as it lasts, the public confidence in our criminal tribunals must always be liable to injury, and the authority of justice itself must often be abused and misapplied. For this evil which arises from a constant and unavoidable bias against all supposed offenders, the power of appeal is not a sufficient remedy :—the danger to justice, under such circumstances, is not in a few cases, nor in any proportion of cases, but in every case. In all the Magistrate is constable, prosecutor and judge. If the appeal be necessary to secure justice in any case, it must be so in all : and if—as will follow—all sentences by a Magistrate should properly be revised by another authority, it would manifestly be for the public benefit that the appellate tribunal should decide all cases in the first instance. It is well known, on the other hand, that the judicial labours of a Magistrate occupy nearly all his time, that which is devoted to matters strictly executive being only the short space daily employed in hearing *thana* reports. But the effectual management of even a small police force, and the duties of a public prosecutor, ought to occupy the whole of one man's time, and the management of the police of a large district must necessarily be inefficient which, from press of other duties, is slurred over in two hasty hours of each day. I consider it then an indispensable preliminary to the improvement of our system that the duties of preventing crime and of apprehending and prosecuting offenders should, without delay, be separated from the judicial function."

4. Mr. Halliday's opinions on this subject were substantially approved by two other members of the Committee appointed by the Government of Bengal—Mr. W. W. Bird and Mr. J. Lewis. Mr. Bird, who was president of the Committee, stated that he had no objection to the disunion of executive from judicial functions. He added that he had invariably advocated the principle alike in the Revenue and the Judicial Departments, but as it was

at that time pertinaciously disregarded in one department it could not very consistently be introduced in the other. Mr. Lewis characterized Mr. Halliday's proposals as "systematic in plan, complete in detail, and sound in principle." With reference to Mr. Bird's observation, just cited, Mr. Lewis said that it was fallacious "to aver that a departure from right principle in one branch of administration requires, for the sake of consistency, a departure from it in another." It is true that Mr. Halliday, eighteen years later, held a different view, and thought that British administration should conform to the oriental idea of uniting all powers into one centre. But his personal change of opinion does not affect the force of his former arguments.

5. Again, in 1854, in the course of a letter to the Government of India, Mr. C. Beadon, Secretary to the Government of Bengal, wrote :

"The only separation of functions which is really desirable is that of the executive and judicial, the one being a check upon the other : and if the office of Magistrate and Collector be reconstituted on its former footing I think it will have to be considered whether . . . the Magistrates should not be required to make over the greater portion of their judicial duties to qualified subordinates, devoting their own attention chiefly to police matters and the general executive management of their districts."

In November of the same year, as a member of the Council of the Governor-General, the Hon. (afterwards Sir) J. P. Grant recorded a Minute in which he said that the combination of the duty of the Superintendent of Police and Public Prosecutor with the functions of a Criminal Judge was objectionable in principle, and the

practical objections to it had been greatly aggravated by the course of legislation which had raised the judicial powers of a Magistrate six times higher than they were in the days of Lord Cornwallis. "It ought," Mr. Grant continued, "to be the fixed intention of the Government to dis sever as soon as possible the functions of Criminal Judge from those of thief-catcher and Public Prosecutor, now combined in the office of Magistrate. That seems to me to be indispensable as a step towards any great improvement in our criminal jurisprudence."

6. Two years later—in September, 1856—a Despatch of the Court of Directors of the East India Company (No. 41, Judicial Department) on the re-organization of the Police in India pointed out that "to remedy the evils of the existing system, the first step to be taken is, wherever the union at present exists, to separate the police from the administration of the land revenue. . . . In the second place, the management of the police of each district should be taken out of the hands of the Magistrate."

7. In February, 1857, a further Minute was recorded by the Hon. J. P. Grant, member of the Council of the Governor-General, upon the "Union of the functions of Superintendent of Police with those of a Criminal Judge." Mr. Grant, whose opinions Mr. (afterwards Sir Barnes) Peacock generally concurred, wrote :

"The one point for decision, as it appears to me, on which alone the whole question turns, is this—in which way is crime more certainly discovered, proved and punished, and innocence more certainly protected—when two men are occupied each as thief-catcher, prosecutor, and judge, or when one of

them is occupied as thief-catcher and prosecutor, and the other as judge? I have no doubt that the principle of division of labour has all its general advantages, and an immense preponderance of special and peculiar advantages, when applied to this particular case; and I have no doubt that if there is any real difference between India and Europe in relation to this question, the difference is all in favour of relieving the Judge in India from all connexion with the detective officer and prosecutor. The judicial ermine is, in my judgment, out of place in the bye-ways of the detective policeman in any country, and those bye-ways in India are unusually dirty. Indeed, so strongly does this feeling operate, perhaps unconsciously, upon the English minds of the honourable body of men from whom our Magistrates are chosen, that in practice the real evil of the combination is, not that a Judge, whose mind has been put out of balance by his antecedents in relation to the prisoner, tries that prisoner, but that the Superintendent of Police, whose nerve and honesty are indispensable to the keeping of the native police officers in order, abandons all real concern with the detection of crime, and the prosecution of criminals, in the mass of cases, and leaves this important and delicate duty almost wholly, in fact, to the native *darogahs*. . . . If the combination theory were acted upon in reality—if an officer, after bribing spies, endeavouring to corrupt accomplices, laying himself out to hear what every tell-tale has to say, and putting his wit to the utmost stretch, for weeks perhaps, in order to beat his adversary in the game of detection, were then to sit down gravely as a Judge, and were to profess to try dispassionately upon the evidence given in court the question of whether he or his adversary had won the game, I am well convinced that one or two cases of this sort would excite as much indignation as would save me the necessity of all argument *a priori* against the combination theory."

Unfortunately the theory has been acted upon in reality. Actual cases—more than one or two—have excited the vehement indignation against which Mr. Grant sought in 1857 to provide. Mr. Grant added that the objections to separation of judicial and police functions seemed to him, after the best attention he could give them, to be founded on imaginary evils. He refused

to anticipate "such extreme antagonism between the native public officer and the native Judge as would be materially inconvenient." "Under a moderately sensible European Magistrate, controlled by an intelligent Commissioner, who would not talk or act as if police *peons* and *darogahs* were infallible, and dispassionate judges were never right, I cannot see why there should be any such consequences."

8. These, and similar, expressions of opinion were not lost upon the Government of India, as the history of the legislation which was undertaken immediately after the suppression of the Mutiny shows. In 1860 a Commission was appointed to enquire into the organisation of the Police. It consisted of representative officers from the North-West Provinces, Pegu, Bengal, Madras, the Punjab, and Oudh—"all," in the words of Sir Bartle Frere, "men of ripe experience, especially in matters connected with Police." The instructions issued to the Commission contained the following propositions :

"The functions of a police are either protective and repressive or detective, to prevent crime and disorder, or to find out criminals and disturbers of the peace. These functions are in no respect judicial. This rule requires a complete severance of the police from the judicial authorities, whether those of higher grade or the inferior magistracy in their judicial capacity. When, as is often the case in India, various functions are combined in the hands of one Magistrate, it may sometimes be difficult to observe this restriction ; but the rule should always be kept in sight that the official who collects and traces out the links in the chain of evidence in any case of importance should never be the same as the judicial officer, whether of high or inferior grade, who is to sit in judgment on the case. . . . It may sometimes be difficult to insist on this rule, but experience shows it is not

nearly so difficult as would be supposed, and the advantages of insisting on it cannot be overstated."

Again :

"The working police having its own officers exclusively engaged on their own duties in preventing or detecting crime, the question is, at what link in the chain of subordination between the highest and lowest officers in the executive administration is the police to be attached, and so made responsible as well as subordinate to all above that link in the chain? The great object being to keep the judicial and police functions quite distinct, the most perfect organization is, no doubt, when the police is subordinate to none but that officer in the executive Government who is absolved from all judicial duty, or at least from all duty involving original jurisdiction, so that his judicial decisions can never be biassed by his duties as a Superintendent of police. . . . It is difficult to lay down any more definite rule as to the exact point where the subordination should commence than by saying that it should be so arranged that an officer should never be liable to try judicially important cases got up under his own directions as a police officer. . . . This raises the question—Who is to be responsible for the peace of the district? Clearly that officer, whoever he may be, to whom the police are immediately responsible. Under him, it is the duty of every police officer and of every magisterial officer of whatever grade, in their several charges, to keep him informed of all matters affecting the public peace and the prevention and detection of crime. It is his duty to see that both classes of officers work together for this end; as both are subordinate to him, he ought to be able to ensure their combined action. The exact limits of the several duties of the two classes of officers it may be difficult to define in any general rule; but they will not be difficult to fix in practice if the leading principles are authoritatively laid down, and, above all, if the golden rule be borne in mind that the judicial and police functions are not to be mixed up or confounded, that the active work of preventing or detecting crime is to rest entirely with the police, and not to be interfered with by those who are to sit in judgment on the criminal."

9. The Police Commission in their Report (dated September, 1860) expressly recognised and accepted

this "golden rule." Paragraph 27 of their Report was as follows :

"That as a rule there should be complete severance of executive police from judicial authorities ; that the official who collects and traces out the links of evidence—in other words, virtually prosecutes the offender—should never be the same as the officer, whether of high or inferior grade, who is to sit in judgment on the case, even with a view to committal for trial before a higher tribunal. As the detection and prosecution of criminals properly devolve on the police, no police officer should be permitted to have any judicial function."

But although the Commission adopted without question the general principle that judicial and police functions ought not to be confounded, they proposed, as a matter of practical and temporary convenience, in view of "the constitution of the official agency" then existing in India, that an exception should be made in the case of the District Officer. The Commission did not maintain that the principle did not in strictness, apply to him. On the contrary, they appear to have stated expressly that it did. But they recommended that in his case true principle should, for the time being, be sacrificed to expediency. They reported :

"That the same true principle, that the judge and detective officer should not be one and the same, applies to officials having by law judicial functions, and should, as far as possible, be carefully observed in practice. But, with the constitution of the official agency now existing in India, an exception must be made in favour of the District Officer. The Magistrates have long been, in the eye of the law, executive officers, having a general supervising authority in matters of police, originally without extensive judicial powers. In some part of India this original function of the Magistrates has not been widely departed from ; in other parts extensive judicial

powers have been superadded to their original and proper function. This circumstance has imported difficulties in regard to maintaining the leading principle enunciated above, for it is impracticable to relieve the Magistrates of their judicial duties; and, on the other hand, it is at present inexpedient to deprive the police and public of the valuable aid and supervision of the District Officer in the general management of police matters."

The commission recognised that this combination of judicial with police functions was open to objection, but looked forward to a time when improvements in organization would, in actual practice, bring it to an end :—

"That this departure from principle will be less objectionable in practice when the executive police, though bound to obey the magistrate's order *quoad* the criminal administration, is kept departmentally distinct and subordinate to its own officers, and constitutes a special agency having no judicial function. As the organization becomes perfected and the force effective for the performance of its detective duties, any necessity for the Magistrate to take personal action in any case judicially before him ought to cease."

10. The recommendations of the Police Commission were adopted by the Government of India and, in accordance with them, Sir Bartle Frere introduced in the Legislative Council on September 29, 1860, a Bill for the Better Regulation of Police. The debate on the second reading of this measure, which afterwards became Act V. of 1861, and is still in force, is important as showing that the Government of India regarded the exceptional union of judicial with police functions in the District Officer as a temporary compromise. Sir Barnes Peacock, the Vice-President of the Council, stated that he "had always been of opinion that a full and complete separation ought to be made between the two functions,"

while in reply to Mr. A. Sconce, who had argued that some passages in the Report of the Police Commission were at variance with the principle of separation, Sir Bartle Frere said :—

“It was one thing to lay down a principle and another to act on it at once and entirely when it was opposed to the existing system, to all existing forms of procedure, and to prejudices of long standing. Under such circumstances, it was often necessary to come to a compromise. . . . He hoped that at no distant period the principle would be acted upon throughout India as completely as his hon. friend could desire. The hon. member had called the Bill a ‘half and half’ measure. He could assure the hon. gentleman that nobody was more inclined that it should be made a whole measure than he was, and he should be very glad if his hon. friend would only induce the Executive Governments to give it their support so as to effect a still more complete severance of the police and judicial functions than the Bill contemplated.”

The hope expressed by Sir Bartle Frere in 1860 has yet to be fulfilled. It might have been realised in 1872 when the second Code of Criminal Procedure was passed. But the Government and the Legislature of the day were still under the dominion of the fallacy that all power must be centred in the District Magistrate, and the opportunity of applying the sound principle for which Sir Bartle Frere had contended was unfortunately rejected. In 1882 the Code of Criminal Procedure was further revised, and the Select Committee, in their report on the Criminal Procedure Bill, said :—

“At the suggestion of the Government of Bengal, we have omitted section 38, conferring police powers on Magistrates. We consider that it is inexpedient to invest Magistrates with such powers, or to make their connexion with the police more close than it is at present.”

(b)—THE EXISTING GRIEVANCE, AND THE REMEDY.

11. The request which we have now the honour of urging is, therefore, that—in the words used by Sir J. P. Grant in 1854—the functions of criminal judge should be dissevered from those of thief-catcher and public prosecutor, or—in the words used by Sir Barnes Peacock in 1860—that a full and complete separation should be made between judicial and executive functions. At present these functions are to a great extent combined in India, especially in the case of the officers who in the Districts of Regulation Provinces are known as Collector-Magistrates, and the non-Regulation Provinces are known as Deputy Commissioners. The duties of these officers are thus described by Sir W. W. Hunter :*—“As the name of Collector-Magistrate implies, his main functions are twofold. He is a fiscal officer, charged with the collection of the revenue from the land and other sources ; he also is a revenue and criminal judge, both of first instance and in appeal. But his title by no means exhausts his multifarious duties. He does in his smaller local sphere all that the Home Secretary superintends in England, and a great deal more ; for he is the representative of a paternal and not a constitutional government. Police, jails, education, municipalities, roads, sanitation, dispensaries, the local taxation, and the Imperial revenues of his District, are to him matters of daily concern.” It is submitted that, just as Lord Cornwallis’s Government held a century ago that the proprietors of land could never consider the privileges which had been con-

* “The Indian Empire,” p. 513 3rd edition.

ferred upon them as secure while the revenue officers were vested with judicial powers, so also the administration of justice is brought into suspicion while judicial powers remain in the hands of the detective and public prosecutor.

12. The grounds upon which the request for full separation is made are sufficiently obvious. They have been anticipated in the official opinions already cited. It may, however, be convenient to summarize the arguments which have been advanced of late years by independent public opinion in India. These are to the effect (i) that the combination of judicial with executive duties in the same officer violates the first principles of equity ; (ii) that while a judicial officer ought to be thoroughly impartial and approach the consideration of any case without previous knowledge of the facts, an executive officer does not adequately discharge his duties unless his ears are open to all reports and information which he can in any degree employ for the benefit of his District ; (iii) that executive officers in India, being responsible for a large amount of miscellaneous business have not time satisfactorily to dispose of judicial work in addition ; (iv) that, being keenly interested in carrying out particular measures, they are apt to be brought more or less into conflict with individuals, and, therefore, that it is inexpedient that they should also be invested with judicial powers ; (v) that under the existing system Collector-Magistrates do, in fact, neglect judicial for executive work ; (vi) that appeals from revenue assessments are apt to be futile when they are heard by revenue

officers ; (vii) that great inconvenience, expense, and suffering are imposed upon suitors required to follow the camp of a judicial officer who, in the discharge of executive duties, is making a tour of his District ; and (viii) that the existing system not only involves all whom it concerns in hardship and inconvenience but also, by associating the judicial tribunal with the work of the police and of detectives, and by diminishing the safeguards afforded by the rules of evidence, produces actual miscarriages of justice and creates, although justice be done, opportunities of suspicion, distrust and discontent which are greatly to be deplored. There is, too, a further argument for the separation, which arises out of the very nature of the work incidental to the judicial office, and which of itself might well be regarded as conclusive in the matter. It is no longer open to us to content ourselves with the pleasant belief that to an Englishman of good sense and education, with his unyielding integrity and quick apprehension of the just and the equitable, nothing is easier than the patriarchal administration of justice among oriental populations. The trial in Indian courts of justice of every grade must be carried out in the English method, and the judge or magistrate must proceed to his decision upon the basis of facts to be ascertained only through the examination and cross-examination before him of eye-witnesses testifying each to the relevant facts observed by him, and nothing more. It is not necessary for us to dwell on the importance of this procedure, nor is it too much to say that with this system of trial no judicial officer can efficiently perform

his work otherwise than by close adherence to the methods and rules which the long experience of English lawyers has dictated, and of which he cannot hope to acquire a practical mastery, unless he makes the study and practice of them his serious business. In other words it is essential to the proper and efficient—and we might add impartial—administration of justice that the judicial officer should be an expert specially educated and trained for the work of the court.

13. In Appendix B to this Memorial summaries are given of various cases which, it is thought, illustrate in a striking way some of the dangers that arise from the present system. These cases of themselves might well remove—to adopt Sir J. P. Grant's words—"the necessity of argument *a priori* against the combination theory." But the present system is not merely objectionable on the ground that from time to time it is, and is clearly proved to be, responsible for a particular case of actual injustice. It is also objectionable on the ground that, so long as it exists, the general administration of justice is subjected to suspicion, and the strength and authority of the Government are seriously impaired. For this reason it is submitted that nothing short of complete separation of judicial from executive functions by legislation will remove the danger. Something perhaps, might be accomplished by purely executive measures. Much, no doubt, might be accomplished by granting to accused persons, in important cases, the option of standing their trial before a Sessions Court. But these palliatives fall short of the only complete and satisfactory remedy, which

is, by means of legislation, to make a clear line of division between the judicial and the executive duties now often combined in one and the same officer. So long as Collector-Magistrates have the power themselves to try, or to delegate to subordinates within their control, cases as to which they have taken action or received information in an Executive capacity, the administration of justice in India is not likely to command complete confidence and respect.

14. It would be easy to multiply expressions of authoritative opinion in support of the proposed reform. But, in view of the opinions already cited, it may be enough to add that, in a debate on the subject which took place in the House of Lords on May 8th, 1893, Lord Kimberley, then Secretary of State for India, and his predecessor, Lord Cross, showed their approval of the principle of separation in no ambiguous terms. Lord Cross said, on that occasion, that it would be, in his judgment, an "excellent plan" to separate judicial from executive functions, and that it would "result in vast good to the Government of India." It was in the same spirit that Lord Dufferin, as Viceroy of India, referring to the proposal for separation put forward by the Indian National Congress, characterised it as a "counsel of perfection." Appendix A to the present Memorial contains, *inter alia*, the favourable opinions of the Right Hon. Sir Richard Garth, late Chief Justice of Bengal, the Right Hon. Lord Hobhouse, Legal Member of the Viceroy's Council, 1872-77, the Right Hon. Sir Richard Couch, late Chief Justice of Bengal, Sir J. B. Phear, late Chief

Justice of Ceylon, Sir R. T. Reid, Q.C., M.P., Attorney-General, 1894-5, Sir William Markby, late Judge of the High Court, Calcutta, and Sir Raymond West, late Judge of the High Court, Bombay. These opinions were collected and compiled by the British Committee of the Indian National Congress, and, among other important indications of opinions prevalent in India, we beg to refer you to the series of resolutions adopted by the Indian National Congress—which Lord Lansdowne, as Viceroy, referred to in 1891 as a “perfectly legitimate movement” representing in India “what in Europe would be called the more advanced Liberal party.” In 1886 the Congress adopted a resolution recording “an expression of the universal conviction that a complete separation of executive and judicial functions has become an urgent necessity,” and urging the Government of India “to effect this separation without further delay.” Similar resolutions were carried in 1887 and 1888, and the proposal formed in 1889, 1890, and 1891 the first section of an “omnibus” resolution affirming the resolutions of previous Congresses. In 1892 the Congress again carried a separate resolution on the question, adding to its original resolution a reference to “the serious mischief arising to the country from the combination of judicial and executive functions.” In 1893 the resolution carried by the Congress was as follows :—

“That this Congress, having now for many successive years vainly appealed to the Government of India to remove one of the gravest stigmas on British rule in India, one fraught with incalculable oppression to all classes of the community throughout the country, now hopeless of any other redress,

humbly entreats the Secretary of State for India to order the immediate appointment, in each province, of a Committee (one-half at least of whose members shall be non-official natives of India, qualified by education and experience in the workings of the various courts to deal with the question) to prepare each a scheme for the complete separation of all judicial and executive functions in their own provinces with as little additional cost to the State as may be practicable and the submission of such schemes, with the comments of the several Indian Governments thereon, to himself, at some early date which he may be pleased to fix."

A similar resolution was carried in 1894, 1895, and 1896. During recent years, also, practical schemes for separation have been laid before the Congress.

(c)—ANSWERS TO POSSIBLE OBJECTIONS.

15. The objections which, during the course of a century, have been urged against the separation of judicial and executive functions are reducible, on analysis, to three only : (i) that the system of combination works well, and is not responsible for miscarriage of justice ; (ii) that the system of combination, however indefensible it may seem to Western ideas, is necessary to the position, the authority, and, in a word, to the "prestige" of an Oriental officer ; and (iii) that separation of the two functions, though excellent in principle, would involve an additional expenditure which is, in fact, prohibitive in the present condition of the Indian finances.

16. It is obvious that the first objection is incompatible with the other two objections. It is one thing to defend the existing system on its merits : it is another thing to say that, although it is bad, it would be too dangerous or too costly to reform it. The first objection

is an allegation of fact. The answer—and, it is submitted, the irresistible answer—is to be found in the cases which are set forth in Appendix B to this Memorial. The cases are but typical examples taken from a large number. It may be added that, among the leading advocates of separation in India, are Indian barristers of long and varied experience in the Courts who are able to testify, from personal knowledge, to the mischievous results of the present system. Their evidence is confirmed, also from personal knowledge, by many Anglo-Indian Judges of long experience.

17. The second objection—that the combination of judicial and executive functions is necessary to the “prestige” of an Oriental officer—is perhaps more difficult to handle. For reasons which are easy to understand, it is not often put forward in public and authoritative statements. But it is common in the Anglo-Indian press, it finds its way into magazine articles written by returned officers, and in India it is believed, rightly or wrongly, to lie at the root of all the apologies for the present system. It has been said that Oriental ideas require in an officer entrusted with large executive duties the further power of inflicting punishment on individuals. If the proposition were true, it would be natural to expect that the existing system would be supported and defended by independent public opinion in India instead of being—as it is—deplored and condemned. It is not reasonable to assume that the Indian of to-day demands in the responsible officers of a civilised Government a combination of functions which at an earlier time an

arbitrary despot may have enforced. The further contention that a District Magistrate ought to have the power of inflicting punishment because he is the local representative of the Sovereign appears to be based upon a fallacy and a misapprehension. The power of inflicting punishment is, indeed, part of the attributes of Sovereignty. But it is not, on that ground, any more necessary that the power should be exercised by a Collector-Magistrate, who is head of the police and the revenue-system, than that it should be exercised by the Sovereign in person. The same reasoning, if it were accepted, would require that the Viceroy should be invested with the powers of a criminal judge. But it is not suggested that the Viceroy's "prestige" is lower than the "prestige" of a District Judge because the Judge passes sentences upon guilty persons and the Viceroy does not. It is equally a misapprehension to assume that those who urge the separation of judicial from executive duties desire the suppression or extinction of legitimate authority. They ask merely for a division of labour. The truth seems to be that the somewhat vague considerations which are put forward in defence of the existing system on the ground that it is necessary to the due authority of a District Magistrate had their origin in the prejudices and the customs of earlier times, revived, to some extent, in the unsettled period which followed the Indian Mutiny. We venture to submit that these considerations are not only groundless and misplaced, but that the authority of Government, far from being weakened by the equitable division of judicial and executive duties, would

be incalculably strengthened by the reform of a system which is at present responsible for many judicial scandals.

18. The financial objection alone remains, and it is upon this objection that responsible authorities appear to rely. When Lord Dufferin described the proposal for separation as a "counsel of perfection," he added that the condition of Indian finance prevented it, at that time, from being adopted. Similarly, in the debate in the House of Lords on May 8th, 1893, to which reference has already been made, Lord Kimberley, then Secretary of state, said :

"The difficulty is simply this, that if you were to alter the present system in India you would have to double the staff throughout the country :"

and his predecessor, Lord Cross, said :—

"It [the main principle raised in the discussion] is a matter of the gravest possible importance, but I can only agree with what my noble friend has stated, that in the present state of the finances of India it is absolutely impossible to carry out that plan, which to my mind would be an excellent one, resulting in vast good to the Government of India."

The best answer to this objection is to be found in the scheme for separation drawn up in 1893 by Mr. Romesh Chunder Dutt, C.I.E., late Commissioner of the Orissa Division (at that time District Magistrate of Midnapur) and printed in Appendix A to this Memorial. In these circumstances it is not necessary to argue either (i) that any expense which the separation of judicial from executive duties might involve would be borne, and borne cheerfully, by the people of India ; or (ii) that it might well be met by economies in certain other di-

rections. Mr. Dutt shows that the separation might be effected by simple re-arrangement of the existing staff, without any additional expense whatsoever. Mr. Dutt's scheme refers specially to Bengal, the Presidency, that is, for which the reform had been described as impracticable on the ground of cost. Similar schemes for other Presidencies and Provinces have been framed, but it was understood that the most serious financial difficulty was apprehended in Bengal.

19. In view of foregoing considerations we earnestly trust that you will direct the Government of India to prepare a scheme for the complete separation of judicial and executive functions, and to report upon this urgently pressing question at an early date.

We have the honour to be, Sir,

Your obedient Servants,

HOBHOUSE,
 RICHARD GARTH,
 RICHARD COUCH,
 CHARLES SARGENT,
 WILLIAM MARKBY,
 JOHN BUDD PHEAR,
 J. SCOTT,
 W. WEDDERBURN,
 ROLAND K. WILSON,
 HERBERT J. REYNOLDS.

SCHEME (PRINTED IN "INDIA" FOR AUGUST, 1893) SUGGESTED
BY MR. ROMESH DUTT, C.I.E., COMMISSIONER OF
THE ORISSA DIVISION (AT THAT TIME DISTRICT
MAGISTRATE OF MIDNAPUR).

The recent discussions on the subject of the separation of Judicial and Executive functions in India have given sincere gratification to my countrymen in India. They have read with satisfaction, and also with feelings of gratitude, the views expressed by Lord Stanley in the House of Lords, and the clear and emphatic opinion on the subject expressed by Lord Kimberley. They have learnt with sincere joy that the system of uniting Judicial and Executive functions in the same officer has been condemned by two successive Secretaries of State, Lord Cross and Lord Kimberley. And they entertain a legitimate hope that a policy which has been thus condemned by the highest authorities in Indian affairs will not long continue to be the policy of British rule in India.

Sir Richard Garth, late Chief Justice of the High Court of Calcutta, whose paper on this subject led to the discussions in the House of Lords, has since explained the history of the present system of administration in a clear, lucid, and forcible manner. He has shown that so far back as 1860 a commission appointed to report on the police declared that "the judicial and police functions were not to be mixed up and confounded." He has pointed out that the late Sir Barnes Peacock

and other high authorities were against the union of these functions, and that the late Sir Bartle Frere, in introducing the Bill which afterwards became the Police Act of 1861, "hoped that at no distant period the principle (of the separation of Judicial and Executive functions) would be acted upon throughout India." Sir Richard Garth has also informed the public that between 1865 and 1868 the highest civilian authorities in India were again consulted on the subject, and, according to Sir James Stephen, the District Magistrates themselves were "greatly embarrassed by the union in their persons of Judicial and Executive functions." Sir Richard has further told us that under Lord Ripon's Government opinions were again collected, and the present system was only continued because the retention of Judicial powers in the hands of a District Officer was considered (and very wrongly considered, *vide* Lord Kimberley's speech) "essential to the weight and influence of his office." And, lastly, Sir Richard has quoted the words of the present Secretary of State that the present system "is contrary to right and good principle," and he has also quoted the words of the late Secretary of State, who concurs in this opinion with Lord Kimberley.

Such are the opinions of men most capable of forming a judgment on the present system of administration in India, and responsible administrators are anxious to effect a reform which will remove the evil without materially adding to the cost of administration. A practicable scheme of reform will be not unwelcome at

the present moment, and many of my countrymen and some of my English friends have asked me to state my views on the subject, as I happen to be in England just now. I venture therefore to suggest the leading features of a scheme which has for many years appeared perfectly feasible to myself, and which I believe will meet the views and wishes not only of my countrymen, but of most Englishmen also, who are quite as anxious for wholesome reform on this point as my countrymen.

It is necessary for me to state that I have been employed on administrative work in Bengal for twenty-two years, and that I have had ample opportunities to observe the practical working of the present system of administration during this period. Within this period I have had the honour of holding charge of some of the largest and most important districts in Bengal—like Bardwan, with its population of a million and a half, and Bakarganj, with its population of two millions, and Midnapur, with its population of two and a half millions, and Maimansingh, with its population of three and a half millions—which is equal to the population of many a small kingdom in Europe. In these extensive and thickly populated districts I have, for years past, combined in myself the functions of the head of the Police, the head Magistrate, the head Superintendent of Prisons, the head Revenue Officer, the head Tax Collector, the head of the Government Treasury, the head Manager of Government Estates, the head Manager of Minors' States, the head Engineer, the head Sanitary Officer, the head Superintendent of Primary

Schools, and various other functions. I have, for years past, directed and watched police enquiries in important cases, had the prisoners in those cases tried by my subordinates, heard and disposed of the appeals of some of those very prisoners, and superintended their labour in prisons. And during all these years I have held the opinion that a separation of Judicial and Executive functions would make our duties less embarrassing, and more consistent with our ideas of judicial fairness; that it would improve both Judicial work and Executive work; and that it would require no material addition to the cost of administration.

Bengal is divided into nine Divisions, viz.: 1. Presidency. 2. Bardwan. 3. Rajshahi. 4. Dacca. 5. Chittagong. 6. Orissa. 7. Patna. 8. Bhagalpur. 9. Chutia-Nagpur. I think it is not feasible, nor desirable perhaps for the present, to effect a separation of Judicial and Executive functions in the Division of Chutia-Nagpur, which consists of Non-Regulation Districts. It is also, perhaps, undesirable to effect such separation in the Districts of Darjiling and Jalpaiguri in Rajshahi Division; in the Hill Tracts of Chittagong Division; and in the Santal Parganas of Bhagalpur Division. In the remaining portions of the Province it is possible to effect the separation at once.

The population of Bengal (excluding Tributary States and the States of the Maharajas of Kuch Behar, Sikkim, Tipperah), is, according to the census of 1891, *seventy-one millions* in round numbers. The population of the districts alluded to in the last paragraph, in which

a separation of Judicial and Executive functions is for the present impracticable, is *seven millions* in round numbers. In the remaining portions of Bengal, having a population of *sixty-four millions*, it is possible to effect the desired separation at once.

Generally speaking, there are two senior Covenanted officers in every Regulation District in Bengal, viz., a District Judge and a District Magistrate. The District Judge is the head of all subordinate judicial officers who dispose of civil cases, and he also tries such important criminal cases as are committed to the Sessions. The work of the District Magistrate is more varied, as has been indicated above. He is the head of the police, supervises prisons, collects revenue and taxes, sells opium and settles liquor-shops, constructs roads and bridges, regulates primary education, and combines with these and other Executive duties the functions and powers of the head Magistrate of his district.

My scheme is simple. The District Magistrate, whom I will henceforth call the District Officer, should be employed purely on executive and revenue work, which is sufficiently varied, onerous, and engrossing, and should be relieved of his judicial duties, which should be transferred to the District Judge. The subordinates of the District Officer, who will continue to perform revenue and executive work only, will remain under him; while those of his present subordinates who will be employed on purely judicial work should be subordinate to the Judge and not to the District Officer.

At present the subordinates of the District officer

combine executive and revenue and judicial work. A Joint-Magistrate or Assistant-Magistrate (subordinate to the District Officer) tries criminal cases, and also does revenue and executive work. A Deputy-Magistrate (similarly subordinate to the District Officer) also tries criminal cases and does revenue and executive work. This arrangement must be changed.

I will first take the case of Joint-Magistrates and Assistant-Magistrates, who are Covenanted officers. Young civilians, as soon as they arrive in Bengal, are posted as Assistant-Magistrates; they try criminal cases and also help the District Officer in his revenue and executive work. After they have had some experience in their work and learnt something of the people, and after they have passed two examinations in Indian law and accounts, and the languages of the Province, they are promoted to be Joint-Magistrates. And the Joint-Magistrate tries all the more important criminal cases, and performs much of the important criminal work of the district. And in course of time he becomes a District Officer or a District Judge.

Referring to the Bengal Civil List for April, 1893, which is the last number that is available to me in London now, I find that the present number of Joint-Magistrates and officiating Joint-Magistrates in Bengal (excluding those acting in higher capacities, or on special duty) is only twenty-two. And the number of Assistant-Magistrates, after such exclusion, is also twenty-two. As there are over forty districts in Bengal, it is clear that on the average each District Officer has only one Covenanted

Assistant (Joint or Assistant-Magistrate) and no more. In some districts there are more than one, in smaller districts there are none.

I propose that the Assistant-Magistrates should be employed purely on revenue, executive and police work, and should be subordinate to the District Officer. And when the Assistant-Magistrates are promoted to be Joint-Magistrates, they should be employed purely on judicial work, and be subordinate to the District Judge.

This proposal will not only secure the separation of functions contemplated, but will secure two other distinctly beneficial results. In the first place, young civilians fresh from England, and wholly unacquainted with the manners and habits, and even the colloquial language, of the people of India, will be stopped from trying criminal cases until they have acquired some local knowledge and experience by doing revenue and general executive work, and watching police cases and police administration. And in the second place, such young civilians will receive a more systematic and less confused training in their duties by devoting their attention during the first two or three years to purely executive and revenue and police work, and then employing themselves for some years on purely judicial work.

I next come to the Deputy-Magistrates, who are uncovenanted officers, and generally natives of India. They also combine judicial, executive, and revenue work, and are subordinate to the District Officer. The Civil List gives their number as 305 in all ; but excluding those on leave, or employed on special duty, or in sub-

divisions (of which I will speak later on), there are, on an average, only four Deputy-Magistrates in the headquarters of each district to help the District Officer. In small districts there are, perhaps, only two ; in specially large districts there are as many as six.

I propose that in each district one-half of the Deputy Magistrates may be employed on purely executive and revenue work, and be placed under the District Officer, and that the other half be employed on purely judicial work, and placed under the District Judge. In some districts, where the revenue work is particularly heavy, probably more than half the Deputy-Magistrates may be placed under the District Officer. And in other districts, where the criminal work is more important, the Judge may require more than half the Deputy-Magistrates. These details can be very easily settled. But in the main it is clear and self-evident that the officers who are able to cope with revenue and criminal work which is heaped on them in a confused manner will be able to cope with it better under the system of division of labour proposed above.

The results of the proposals made above will be these. The District Officer will still be the head executive officer, the head revenue officer, and the head police officer of his district. He will collect revenue and taxes, and perform all the work connected with revenue administration with the help of his assistants and deputies. He will continue to perform all executive work, and will be armed with the necessary powers. He will watch and direct police investigations, and will be

virtually the prosecutor in criminal cases. But he will cease to try, or to have tried by his subordinates, criminal cases, in respect of which he is the police officer and the prosecutor.

On the other hand, the District Judge will, in addition to his present duties, supervise the work of Joint-Magistrates and Deputy-Magistrates employed on purely judicial work. This work of supervision will be better and more impartially done by trained judicial officers than by over-worked executive officers, who are also virtually prosecutors. And the evil which arises from the combination of the functions of the prosecutor and the judge—of which we have had some striking illustrations of late—will cease to exist when the prosecutor is no longer the judge.

The transfer of all judicial work to the District Judge will give him some additional work ; but he will easily cope with it with the additional officers who will be placed under him under the proposed scheme. In important and heavy districts the Judge will have a Joint-Magistrate under him, and the Joint-Magistrate may in exceptional cases be vested with the powers of an Assistant-Sessions Judge to relieve the District Judge of his sessions work. In districts where there are no Joint-Magistrates, a senior and selected Deputy-Magistrate can do the Joint-Magistrate's work, and efficiently help the Judge in his duty of supervision of criminal work. With regard to criminal appeals, the District Judge now hears all of them from sentences passed by first-class magistrates. The few appeals from second

and third-class magistrates which the District Officer now hears may also be heard by the Judge, and the addition will scarcely be felt. In exceptionally heavy districts, like Maimansingh and Midnapur, criminal appeals did not take more than three hours of my time in a week. A trained Judicial Officer, like the District Judge, would do it in less time, and if he required help in this matter also, his subordinate Joint-Magistrate or a selected Deputy-Magistrate might be empowered to hear petty appeals.

It only remains to deal with what are called sub-districts or sub-divisions in Bengal. The Bengal districts are generally extensive in area ; and, while the central portions are managed and administered from headquarters it is found convenient to form the outlying portions into separate sub-districts or sub-divisions, and to place them in charge of Sub-Divisional Officers. Such Sub-Divisional Officers (generally Deputy-Magistrates, sometimes Assistant or Joint-Magistrates) are also completely subordinate to the District Officer, like the assistants at headquarters.

In Bengal (excluding the backward districts in which the introduction of the proposed scheme is at present impracticable) there are seventy-five sub-divisions. There is only one Sub-Divisional Officer in each sub-division, and he performs revenue and executive and judicial work in his sub-division as his superior, the District Officer, does for the whole district. The question arises, how the scheme of separation can be introduced in these seventy-five sub-divisions.

There is a class of officers, called Sub-Deputy Collectors, who are generally employed on revenue work, but sometimes perform judicial work and try criminal cases. Some of them are employed at headquarters, while others are sent to important Sub-Divisions to help Sub-Divisional Officers. For many years past the work in Sub-Divisions has been increasing, and the demand for a Sub-Deputy Collector in every Sub-Division in Bengal has been growing also. It has been urged that Sub-Divisional Officers who are mainly employed on judicial work cannot find time to perform their revenue work without help. It has also been urged, with great force, that during the absence of Sub-Divisional Officers on their annual tours Sub-Divisional treasuries have to be closed, much to the inconvenience of the Postal Department, the Civil Justice Department, and all Government Departments, as well as the public. To remove all this inconvenience, and to give the necessary help to Sub-Divisional Officers, it has been urged that a Sub-Deputy Collector should be placed in every sub-division. This should now be done.

The present number of Sub-Deputy Collectors (excluding those who are acting in higher capacities) is 97. Allowing for officers on leave, there will still be 75 officers always available for employment in the 75 sub-divisions. And when a Sub-Deputy Collector is thus posted in each sub-division, he can be entrusted with the revenue work of the sub-division, and be subordinate to the District Officer, while the Sub-Divisional Officer will be subordinate to the District Judge.

I make this proposal after a careful consideration of

the nature of the revenue work which has to be done in sub-divisions. All important revenue work connected with Land Revenue, Cesses, Income Tax, Certificates, etc., is transacted in the headquarters of the district and the revenue work of sub-divisions is light and easy. Similarly, the work of control and supervision of the Police Department is done at headquarters, and the Sub-Deputy Collector will have little to do in this line. The treasury work in sub-divisions is light, and is now often done by Sub-Deputy Collectors. On the whole, therefore, I am satisfied that a Sub-Deputy Collector will, under the instructions of the District Officer, be quite competent to manage the revenue and other work of sub-divisions, when the judicial functions have been separated and made over to the Sub-Divisional Officer.

There is only one objection which can be reasonably urged against this scheme. Many Sub-Deputy Collectors are now employed at the headquarters of districts, sometimes on important work, and to take them all away for sub-divisions may be impracticable. Some District Officers may reasonably urge that they require Sub-Deputy Collectors at the district headquarters also, and, where this is satisfactorily shown, the requisition should be complied with. It may be necessary, therefore, to appoint twenty or thirty additional Sub-Deputy Collectors, and this is the only increase to the cost of administration which appears to me necessary for effecting a complete separation between Judicial and Executive functions in Bengal.

Even this additional cost may be met by savings in

other departments. Special Deputy Collectors and Sub-Deputy Collectors are employed on excise work, and their special services are wholly unnecessary in this department. It has always appeared to me, and to many others, that the services of such trained and well-qualified officers are wasted in performing work which does not require officers of their rank. If these officers were withdrawn from the Excise Department, and if the work of that department were included in the general work of the district, as was the case some years ago, it would probably be unnecessary to appoint additional Sub-Deputy Collectors, as recommended in the last paragraph.

The scheme which has been briefly set forth in the preceding paragraphs is a practicable one, and can be introduced under the present circumstances of Bengal, excluding the backward tracts. I have worked both as Sub-Divisional Officer and as District Officer in many of the districts in Bengal, and I would undertake to introduce the scheme in any Bengal District, and to work it on the lines indicated above.

I have only to add that if the scheme set forth above—with such modifications in details as may be deemed necessary after a careful consideration of it by the Government—be introduced, it will be necessary to recast the Code of Criminal Procedure so as to relieve the District Officer and his subordinates of judicial powers in criminal cases, and to vest them in the District Judge and his subordinates. The police work, the revenue work, and the general executive work can then be performed by the District Officer with greater care and

satisfaction to himself, and also to the greater satisfaction of the people in whose interest he administers the District.

Mr. Romesh Dutt wrote in *INDIA* for October, 1893 :—

My paper on this subject appeared in the August number of *INDIA*. The paper has been carefully read by many gentlemen interested in questions of Indian administration, and capable of forming a proper judgment on such questions. Their opinions will help the public in forming a correct opinion on this very important subject.

The Right Hon. Sir Richard Garth, Q.C., Late Chief Justice of Bengal, has given my views his qualified support from a judicial point of view. As his remarks have already appeared in the August number of *INDIA* it is unnecessary for me to do more than quote one or two sentences only.

“So far,” he says, “as I am capable myself of forming an opinion upon his scheme, I entirely approve of it. It seems to me the most natural and obvious means of separating the two great divisions of labour, the executive and the judicial. . . . It seems only in accordance with reason that magistrates who are employed upon executive work should be under the chief executive officer of each district, and that those who are employed in judicial work should be under the chief judicial officer.”

These remarks are important, as there is no higher authority on judicial questions concerning Bengal than the late Chief Justice of that province.

In the same way there is no Englishman living who

can speak with higher authority on executive and administrative questions concerning Bengal than Mr. Reynolds, late Secretary to the Government of Bengal. He passed his official life in that province, and rose from the lowest appointments in the Civil Service of Bengal to one of the highest. He held charge of some of the most extensive and important districts in Bengal, and performed those combined judicial and executive duties which a district officer in Bengal has to perform. He rose to be Secretary to the Bengal Government, and in that capacity presided over the executive administration of the province. His opinion, therefore, has a unique value and importance.

Mr. Reynolds has suggested one modification to my scheme, and subject to that modification has entirely approved of it. I proposed to contrast sub-deputy collectors with the revenue and executive work of Bengal sub-divisions. Mr. Reynolds thinks that in the more important sub-divisions a deputy collector, and not a sub-deputy collector, should be entrusted with these duties. A suggestion coming from such an authority is entitled to respect, and I accept it in its entirety. Let deputy collectors be employed in the more important sub-divisions to do the revenue and executive work and sub-deputy collectors in the lighter sub-divisions. This modification will require the appointment of twenty or thirty additional deputy collectors, instead of as many sub-deputy collectors, whose appointment I proposed. Thus modified my scheme has Mr. Reynolds' entire support and approval.

My scheme has been read and approved by other gentlemen, who are still in the Civil Service of Bengal. One of them made to me, independently of Mr. Reynolds, the same suggestion which Mr. Reynolds has made. One the whole, therefore, I believe, I am justified in stating that my scheme suggests a practicable way of separating the executive and judicial services in Bengal, without materially adding to the cost of administration.

I have purposely refrained from saying anything on the subject of the existing rules of promotion in the Civil Service. Whether these rules will require modification in some respects after the judicial and executive services have been separated is a matter on which the opinion of the Government of Bengal must be final and conclusive. When I joined the Service in 1871 members of the Service were promoted from the rank of joint magistrates to be district officers, and from the rank of district officers to the posts of district judges. It may be considered desirable and necessary to revert to this old rule of promotion after the district officers have been relieved of their judicial duties. It may be also considered desirable to rule that an assistant magistrate will be entitled to rise to the rank and the judicial powers of a joint magistrate only after he has served as assistant for a certain number of years. Such a rule will ensure some degree of experience and local knowledge in judicial officers, and will also prevent frequent reversions from the post of a joint magistrate to that of assistant. These, however, are matters which can be best considered and decided by the Government

of Bengal when the separation of the judicial and executive services has been decided upon. The Bengal Government will find no difficulty in shaping the rules of promotion in the Civil Service according to the exigencies of a just and proper system of administration.

With regard to the details of the administrative arrangements given in my previous paper, no modification except that of Mr. Reynolds has been suggested to me by my friends competent to form a judgment on the subject. I have no doubt that the scheme as modified and supported by the late Secretary to the Government of Bengal will receive the consideration which it deserves from the authorities, both in India and in England.

XVIII. LIMITATION OF THE LAND TAX.

*[Memorial submitted to the Secretary of State for
India on December, 20, 1902.]*

MY LORD,

In view of the terrible famines with which India has been lately afflicted, we, the undersigned, who have spent many years of our lives among the people, and still take a deep interest in their welfare, beg to offer the following suggestions to your Lordship in Council, in the hope that the Land Revenue administration may be everywhere placed on such a sound and equitable basis as to secure to the cultivators of the soil a sufficient margin of profit to enable them better to withstand the pressure of future famines.

2.—We are well aware that the primary cause of famines is the failure of rain, and that the protection of large tracts of country by the extension of irrigation from sources that seldom or never fail has been steadily kept in view and acted on by the Government for many years past; but the bulk of the country is dependent on direct rainfall, and the pinch of famine is most severely felt in the uplands, where the crops fail simply for want of rain. The only hope for the cultivators throughout the greater part of India is therefore that they should be put in such a position as to enable them to tide over an occasional bad season.

3.—To place the cultivators in such a position, we consider it essential that the share taken as the Government demand on the land should be strictly limited in every Province. We fully agree with the views of Lord Salisbury, when Secretary of State for India, as set out in his Minute of April 26th, 1875 :—

“So far as it is possible to change the Indian fiscal system, it is desirable that the cultivator should pay a smaller proportion of the whole national charge. It is not in itself a thrifty policy to draw the mass of revenue from the rural districts, where capital is scarce, sparing the towns, where it is often redundant, and runs to waste and luxury. The injury is exaggerated in the case of India, where so much of the revenue is exported without a direct equivalent.”

4.—Without going into tedious detail, we consider it very advisable that, in those parts of the country in which the Land Tax is not permanently settled, the following principles should be uniformly adhered to :—

(a) Where the Land Revenue is paid directly by the cultivators, as in most parts of Madras and Bombay, the Government demand should be limited to 50 per cent. of the value of the nett produce, after a liberal deduction for cultivation expenses has been made, and should not ordinarily exceed one-fifth of the gross produce, even in those parts of the country where, in theory, one-half of the nett, is assumed to approximate to one-third of the gross, produce.

(b) Where the Land Revenue is paid by landlords, the principle adopted in the Saharanpur Rules of 1855,

whereby the Revenue demand is limited to one-half of the actual rent or assets of such landlords, should be universally applied.

(c) That no revision of the Land Tax of any Province or part thereof should be made within thirty years of the expiration of any former revision.

(d) That when such revision is made in any of those parts of India where the Land Revenue is paid by the cultivators direct to the Government, there should be no increase in the assessment except in cases where the land has increased in value (1) in consequence of improvements in irrigation works carried out at the expense of the Government, or (2) on account of a rise in the value of produce, based on the average prices of the thirty years next preceding such revision.

5.—Lastly, we recommend that a limit be fixed in each Province beyond which it may not be permissible to surcharge the Land Tax with local cesses. We are of opinion that the Bengal rate of $6\frac{1}{4}$ per cent. is a fair one, and that in no case should the rate exceed 10 per cent.

We have the honour to be,

My Lord,

Your obedient Servants,

(Signed)

R. K. PUCKLE,

Late Director of Revenue Settlement, and
Member of the Board of Revenue, Madras.

(Signed)

J. H. GARSTIN,

Late Member of Council, Madras.

J. B. PENNINGTON,

Late Collector of Tanjore, Madras.

H. J. REYNOLDS,

Late Revenue Secretary to the Government of Bengal, and late Member of the Legislative Council of the Governor General of India.

RICHARD GARTH,

Late Chief Justice of Bengal.

ROMESH C. DUTT,

Late Offg. Commissioner of Orissa Division in Bengal, and Member of the Bengal Legislative Council.

C. J. O'DONNELL,

Late Commissioner of the Bhagalpur and Rajshahi Divisions, in Bengal.

A. ROGERS,

Late Settlement Officer and Member of Council in Bombay.

W. WEDDERBURN,

Late Acting Chief Secretary to the Government of Bombay.

JOHN JARDINE,

Late Judge of the High Court of Bombay.

J. P. GOODRIDGE,

Late B.C.S., and formerly Offg. Settlement Commissioner, C.P.

NOTE ON CLAUSE (a).

Clause (a) in para 4 of the above Memorial, recommending the adoption of one-fifth the produce as the maximum of the Land Tax when realized from cultivators direct, is based on a similar rule made for Bengal in 1883. Mr. Romesh Dutt addressed the following remarks on this point to the Famine Commission of 1900, in his letter dated February, 28, 1901.

"4. My recommendation * * runs thus: 'Where the state receives land revenue direct from cultivators, we ask that the rate may not exceed one-fifth the gross produce of the soil in any case, and that the average of a District, including dry lands and wet lands, be limited to one-tenth the gross produce, which is approximately the revenue in Northern India.' The first portion of this recommendation is based on a rule which was proposed for Bengal in the Resolution of the Bengal Government dated 6th August 1883. It was proposed in that Resolution that one-fifth of the gross produce should be the maximum of rent which should not be exceeded in any single case. The proposal was not embodied in the Bengal Tenancy Act of 1885, because, I believe, it was found that rents, when paid in money, seldom exceeded this proposed maximum, and often fell far short of it. In contrast to this state of things, I may be permitted to point out that in Madras the rule recognized by the Board of Revenue and the Government is that the revenue paid by cultivators should not exceed one-third the gross produce. I venture to point out that this is inequitable and unfair. Madras is not a richer or a more

fertile province than Bengal, and the limit of the Government demand [the Land Tax] in Madras should not be higher than the limit [of the Rent] which was proposed for private landlords in Bengal.* In Bombay, too, the revenue paid by many cultivators, whose cases came to my own notice during an enquiry I made in March 1900, ranges between 20 and 33 per cent. of the gross produce. I am not speaking here of District averages, but of individual cases only, and I feel certain that the Famine Commission will think it desirable to protect every individual tenant in Bombay and in Madras, as it was proposed to protect every individual tenant in Bengal in 1883. Provincial or District averages, which are so often put forward by official witnesses, afford no adequate protection to individual tenants. The only rule which applies to each individual case, so far as I am aware, is the Madras rule of one-third the produce, which is unfair to the tenants. And I earnestly appeal, therefore, to the Famine Commission to recommend the framing of a more equitable rule, which will afford adequate protection to all individual cases, and to every particular tenant, in Districts and Provinces where the Land Revenue is paid by the tenants.

"5. The second part of my recommendation quoted in the preceding paragraph relates to District averages or Provincial averages. I crave permission to point out that the figures representing these averages can never

* Sir Charles Wood, Secretary of state for India, laid down in his Despatch of 1864 that the Land Tax should be *one-half* the Rent. But it will be seen from what is stated above that the maximum Land Tax claimed by the Government in Madras is nearly *double* of the maximum Rent fixed for private Zemindars in Bengal in 1883.

be accurate, because the actual produce from year to year is never correctly ascertained. To take one remarkable instance, the Famine Commission of 1878, in Volume II, page 112 of their Report, represented the land revenue of Madras as 6·3 per cent. of the gross produce of the Province. But the evidence of the Madras Board of Revenue, quoted in Appendix III, page 394 of the same Report, shews that the real proportion of the Land Revenue to the gross produce in 10 Districts which had been settled was between 12 and 20 per cent. for dry lands, and between 17 and 31 per cent. for wet lands. The reason of this mistake made by the Famine Commission of 1878 in their estimate is obvious. Such estimates are based on the area of land under cultivation, and on the crops they are *likely* to yield, and can never be based on a calculation of the *actual* yield in every individual field in a large District or Province. Patwaris and Patels, who are sometimes employed in estimating the yield, exaggerate the capabilities of soils and villages, and villagers are allowed no chance of proving in a Court of Justice that these estimates are wrong. And thus it happens that when the revenue demand is believed to be only 5 or 6 or 12 per cent. of the gross produce of a District, in reality it bears a much higher proportion to the crops actually reaped by the cultivators from year to year. District averages and Provincial averages are therefore unsafe guides, and do not represent actual facts ; and I therefore once more appeal to the Commission to recommend the adoption of a maximum limit to which every individual

tenant could appeal in each particular case for protection against over-assessment of the Land Tax."

NOTE ON CLAUSE (b).

Clause (b) in para 4 of the Memorial, recommending adherence to the Half-Rental Rule, when the Land Tax is realized from landlords, is based on the Saharanpur Rules of 1855. Mr. Romesh Dutt pointed out in his letter to the Government of India, dated November, 20, 1900, Paras 8 to 13, quoted below, how these Rules were departed from in the Central Provinces of India.

"8. A most serious question is dealt with in your letter when you touch upon the right interpretation of the Half-assets Rule. It is stated that, for the purposes of this rule, "the meaning attached in 1860 to the assets or rental valuation of an estate was not the actually existing rental, but the prospective or potential figure which might hereafter be reached after rents had risen in process of time, and the waste had been brought under cultivation." Permit me to state that this was not the original meaning of the Half-assets Rule when it was framed in 1855 ; that this was not the meaning of the rule when it was extended to eight Districts of the Central Provinces in the same year ; that the Supreme Government never sanctioned such an interpretation of the rule for the purposes of the General Settlement commenced in 1863 ; and that Mr. Mackenzie, the Chief Commissioner of the Central Provinces, did not approve of such an interpretation of the rule when he addressed the Supreme Government, in view of the Revisional

Settlement of 1893. I am convinced, therefore, that the Government of India will not lend their sanction to an untrue interpretation of a plain and unmistakable rule.

“9. Lord Dalhousie’s Government first promulgated the Half-assets Rule in 1855 in the body of rules known as the Saharanpur Rules. Rule xxxvi runs thus :

“The assets of an estate can seldom be minutely ascertained, but more certain information as to the *average net assets* can be obtained now than was formerly the case. This may lead to over-assessment, for there is little doubt that two-thirds, or 66 per cent., is a larger proportion of the *real average assets* than can ordinarily be paid by proprietors, or communities in a long course of years. For this reason the Government have determined so far to modify the rule laid down in para. 52 of the Directions to Settlement Officers, as to limit the demand of the State to 50 per cent., or one-half of the *average net assets*. By this, it is not meant that the *jumma* of each estate is to be fixed at one-half of the *net average assets*, but in taking these assets, with other data into consideration, the Collector will bear in mind that about one-half, and not two-thirds, as heretofore, of the *well-ascertained net-assets*, should be the Government Demand. The Collectors should observe the cautions given in paragraphs 47 to 51 of the treatise quoted, and not waste time in minute and probably fruitless attempts to ascertain exactly the *average net assets* of the estates under Settlement.

The italics are mine. There is not a word in this of the “prospective or potential figure which might here-

after be reached after rents had risen." The words used are "average net assets," "real average assets," "well-ascertained net assets," and so forth. The real meaning of these words does not admit of a shadow of doubt. The Government of Lord Dalhousie meant the actual current assets of an estate, not the prospective and potential figure which might be reached hereafter.

"10. This Rule was extended to eight Districts of the Central Provinces by an Order of N. W. P. Board of Revenue, No. 74, dated the 16th February 1855, and there is nothing in this Order justifying the application of the Rule to the "prospective and potential" assets of an estate. .

"11. It appears from Mr. Mackenzie's letter to the Government of India, No. 501-S, dated Nagpur, the 18th May, 1887, that the Settlement Officers of the Central Provinces violated this rule with their eyes open during the Settlement of 1863, and subsequent years. Mr. J. B. Fuller, Secretary to Mr. Mackenzie, wrote thus in para. 4 of the letter cited above :—

‘Under the method of assessment which was then followed, it was, however, practically impossible for an officer in any part of the Province who saw that an enhancement of revenue was justifiable, and sought to secure this, to give full effect to a rule restricting the Government revenue to a definite share of the assets, unless the term ‘assets’ received a very loose and general interpretation. The ‘assets’ or rental value of each Mahal was in fact determined by the comparison of a number of statistical inferences, the principal of which

was that obtained by the application of soil rates to the areas under different soils in a village, which yielded the 'soil rate rental.' Whether this rental corresponded in any way with the real rental of the Mahal depended on the extent to which rents rose in the proceedings taken for rent adjustment after the assessment was given out.'

It will appear from the above extract that the Half-assets Rule, extended to some Districts of the Central Provinces in 1855, was violated in the settlement of 1863 by Settlement Officers "who saw that an enhancement of revenue was justifiable, and sought to secure this." The violation was effected by giving to the word "assets," not the interpretation intended by Lord Dalhousie's Government, but an untrue interpretation, viz., the potential rental of the estates.

"12. When the time approached for the Revisional Settlement of 1893, Mr. Mackenzie, Chief Commissioner of the Central Provinces, did not desire to attach to the Half-assets Rule the untrue interpretation which had been given to it once before, and therefore desired to do away with the rule altogether. In his letter No. 5018, dated 18th May, 1887, already referred to, Mr. J. B. Fuller, Secretary to Mr. Mackenzie wrote thus in paragraphs 10 and 11 :—

'It must, moreover, be realised that the system of settlement to which the Government has now by law committed itself will render it impossible *to evade the operation of the Half-assets Rule in the manner followed at the last settlement.* It will no longer be practicable

to adopt for the application of the Half-assets Rule a rental value which is in excess of the actual adjusted rental. * * Mr. Mackenzie considers therefore, even in the interests of the people, that it would be safer to abrogate the Half-assets Rule altogether, *than to attempt to evade it by the calculation of hypothetical assets.*'

The italics are mine. It will appear from this extract that Mr. Mackenzie regarded the practice of 1863 an evasion of the Government Rule; that he considered such an evasion impossible in 1893 after the rents had been fixed by law; and that he desired the Rule to be abrogated. The Government of India accordingly abrogated, in 1888, the benevolent Rule which had been extended to the Central Provinces in 1855. And the letter of the Government of India, dated the 31st May 1888, to the Chief Commissioner of the Central Provinces ends thus :—

'In respect to your proposal to vary the assessment between 50 and 65 per cent. of the assets, I am instructed to inform you that the Government of India has some hesitation in allowing in any case so high a percentage as 65 to be taken, and would at least prefer that this maximum be restricted to those cases in which the former percentage was not at any rate below that fraction, and that in other estates 60 per cent. be taken as the highest admissible percentage. With this restriction your proposals are, I am to say, approved.'

"13. I have, in the preceding five paragraphs, briefly sketched the history of the Half-assets Rule in the Central Provinces from 1855 to 1888. And it will appear from

this brief sketch that the real meaning of "assets" was never recognized to be "prospective or potential" rents ; that the rule was "evaded" by Settlement Officers in 1863 by an untrue interpretation of the word "assets" ; that such interpretation never recieved the approval of the Government of India ; and that the Chief Commissioner of the Central Provinces declined in 1887 to accept the interpretation which was given to the rule in 1863. I venture to hope that on a full consideration of all the facts of the case, the Government of Lord Curzon will not sanction an untrue interpretation of a rule the original and true meaning of which is unmistakable. It is an unwise policy to demand a share of "prospective and potential" rents, because such a policy is a direct incitement to landlords to screw up their rents from their tenants. If they succeed in doing this without there being a corresponding increase in the prices, it is an act of injustice and cruelty to the tenants. And if they fail in doing this, the State demand is an injustice and harshness towards them."

NOTE ON CLAUSE (c).

Clause (c) in para 4 of the Memorial, recommending settlements being made for not less than 30 years, is based on the general rule and practice which has been followed by the Indian Government in most Provinces in India since 1833. Mr. Romesh Dutt pointed out in his letter to the Government of India, dated November, 20, 1900, Paras 17 to 19 quoted below, how this rule has been departed from in the Central Provinces of India.—

"17. In your concluding paragraph you state the reasons which have induced His Excellency the Governor-General in Council to approve of a settlement for 20 years in preference to one for 30 years. I may be permitted to point out that this new policy is a departure from the generally accepted policy of the last 70 years. There is an immense amount of literature on the subject of long settlements which must be known to the Government, and I think it unnecessary to prolong this letter by narrating the history of the Thirty years' Rule. It was considered desirable to save landlords and cultivators alike from frequent harassments, incident to settlement operations, by making a settlement only once during the life-time of a generation. It was considered desirable to afford to landlords and cultivators alike time and opportunities and motives to make improvements and to enjoy the fruits of their improvements. It was sought to foster the accumulation of some wealth in the hands of the landed and agricultural classes, and to promote the growth of an enterprising middle class interested in the soil of the country. And it was sought to foster the general prosperity of the people of India, largely dependent on agricultural industry, by giving them long leases. These and similar motives induced the Government of Lord William Bentinck to accept the principle of 30 years' settlement as far back as 1833, and ever since that time, settlements have been made for thirty years in Northern India. In Bombay, too, the same healthy rule has been followed since 1837; and in Madras the general rule, I believe, is

to make settlements for thirty years. In Orissa, three-fourths of which are not permanently settled, the same rule of 30 years has been adhered to, and indeed was relaxed on the occasion of a great famine. The settlement of 1836 ended in 1866, but on account of the great famine of this last year the Government of Lord Lawrence, with a benevolent desire to save the people from harassment, decided to continue the old settlement for another thirty years. A revision of the settlement therefore took place in 1896, under my supervision when I was acting as Commissioner of that Division ; and the Settlement Officer with a praise-worthy and a considerate regard for the condition of the people of that backward division, scarcely raised the existing rents in making the new settlement. It will not be contended that the Central Provinces are, after the famines of 1897 and 1900, in a better condition now than Northern India was in 1833, than Bombay was in 1837, than Madras was when the settlement operations began in 1855, or than Orissa was in 1836 ; and the same reasons which made for the policy of long leases in the earlier day of British Rule in India exist in their full force at the present day, and indeed have acquired additional force in these years of frequent famines. It would be an act of political wisdom, as well as of humanity and kindness, to let the people of India *see* and *feel* from the measures of the Government, that British administrators have no desire to recede from their generous policy of previous times ; that they have no desire to abrogate or explain away the Half-assets Rule ; that they have no intention to modify the 'Thirty years'

Rule ; that they have no wish to impose on the produce of the soil fresh burdens in the shape of cesses, for objects not connected with the improvement of the soil.

“18. Permit me to conclude this letter with a word of apology for the length to which it has run. I desired to state all that I have said because there is a feeling of alarm and of consternation among my countrymen in view of the recent land-settlement policy of the Indian Government. I myself think, the Government of India is as anxious in the present day to promote the material welfare of the people as it ever was within this century. I myself believe, that every high officer under the Government, every Member of the Viceroy's Executive Council, is deeply anxious to secure the general prosperity of the people. But what does not seem to be adequately realised is that land revenue settlements in India have a more direct bearing on the material condition of the people and affect the lives and fortunes of the agricultural people of India more intimately, than any other act of the Government. It is not adequately realised that there is a direct relation of cause and effect between the revenue settlements and the condition of the agricultural people ; that the continuance of the Half-assets Rule and of the 'Thirty years' Rule contributes directly to the material welfare of the people ; that every increase in the State demand and in the frequency of settlements necessarily makes the agricultural people more resourceless and more impoverished. These are truths which we have no representatives to lay before the Viceroy's Executive

Council. Every Member of the Council feels for the people, but every Member, as the head of a particular "spending department," * necessarily has his attention absorbed in the

* *Vide* Sir Auckland Colvin's evidence before the Royal Commission on Indian Expenditure.

task of obtaining a sufficient grant for the efficient working of his department. If an Indian gentleman, sufficiently familiar with the landed classes and the cultivators, like the Hon'ble. Sir Harnam Singh or the Hon'ble. the Maharaja of Darbhanga, had been a Land Revenue Member in the Governor-General's Council, it would have been his duty, as it would have been his privilege, to press the claims of the agricultural people before the Council, and to obtain, if not redress in every case, at least a fair hearing, before new departures from old rules were sanctioned. It is our misfortune that we have in the Executive Council none to represent the interests of the agricultural people, none to urge them, none to defend them. And the sympathy of the Government for the agricultural people of India, deep and sincere as it must be, is absolutely fruitless, unless it translates itself into more liberal rules in the Land Revenue and Settlement Departments.

"19. I have not troubled you with any desire to continue an idle discussion, or to support my previous propositions. My sincere and only desire in all the steps that I have taken within the last twelve months has been to obtain from the Government of India a more lenient treatment of all classes in India connected with the land—tenants and landlords alike,—and in this

endeavour, I trust and hope, I shall not be disappointed. I have not asked for any fresh concessions or any new privileges, but have asked that the old rules may be maintained and kept inviolate. I have asked that the 'Thirty years' Rule, acted on in most parts of India since the time of Lord William Bentinck, may be adhered to in the Central Provinces, which to-day is about the most distressed and impoverished tract of country in Her Majesty's dominions. I have asked that the cesses imposed on the rental be limited to $6\frac{1}{4}$ per cent. as in Bengal, and confined to objects directly concerned with the improvement of agriculture. I have asked that the Half-Assets Rule, sanctioned by the Government of Lord Dalhousie, and not departed from by the Government of Lord Canning, may be adhered to for the good of the people. And in one word, I have asked that the Government of Lord Curzon may be as generous to the people, in the practical working of land revenue settlements, as the former Governments of Lords Bentinck, Dalhousie, and Canning."

NOTE ON CLAUSE (d).

Clause (d) in para 4 of the Memorial is based on a rule which the Marquis of Ripon, then Viceroy of India, framed in 1882. It was accepted by the Madras Government, and remained virtually in operation till the close of Lord Ripon's administration. Lord Ripon retired from India at the close of 1884, and the Secretary of State for India then cancelled this salutary rule in January 1885. The following extract from Mr. Romesh

Dutt's *Open Letter to Lord Curzon*, dated 20th February 1900, indicates the history and the purport of the rule :

"Lord Mayo was of opinion that when the quality of soil and the quantity of produce were once determined, there should be no further alterations in the assessments except on the ground of fluctuations in prices. Lord Northbrook was also in favor of a self-regulating system of assessments, and was against the system of repeating valuations at each fresh settlement. The great famine of 1877 occurred under Lord Lytton's administration, and is estimated to have carried off five millions of the impoverished population of the Madras Presidency. This calamity hastened a solution of the problem, and Lord Ripon, who succeeded Lord Lytton, proceeded on the lines laid down by his predecessors. In his despatch of the 17th October 1882, Lord Ripon laid down the principle that in Districts which had once been surveyed and assessed by the settlement Department, assessments should undergo no further revision except on the sole ground of a rise in prices. This decision was accepted by the Madras Government in 1883. And while it restored to the cultivators something of their old right to a perpetual settlement, it conferred on the Government the right to increase the revenue on the reasonable ground of an increase in prices. It was the best compromise which could be effected after the old right had been sacrificed ; it gave the cultivator some security of assessment without which agriculture cannot flourish in any part of the world ; and it did away with those harassing operations, leading to reclassification of soils

and recalculation of grain outturns which are felt as the most oppressive features of settlement operations in Madras.

“Unfortunately, after the departure of Lord Ripon from India, his proposal was vetoed by the Secretary of State for India in his despatch of the 8th January 1885. The lessons of the Madras famine of 1877 were to some extent forgotten, the impoverished condition of the peasantry was overlooked, and the proposal to which both the Madras Government and the India Government had agreed, for giving some security of assessments to the Madras cultivators, was disapproved by the authorities in London. For the people of Madras, the despatch of the 8th January 1885 is one of the saddest documents ever issued from London ; it reopened the question which had been wisely solved after years of mature deliberation in India ; and it has thrown back the Madras cultivators into another era of uncertainty, needless harassment, and unjust enhancements.”

ENGLISH WORKS

BY THE

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